

Avocado sunblotch

What is Avocado sunblotch?

Avocado sunblotch is a disease caused by *Avocado sunblotch viroid* (ASBVd).

What does it look like?

Symptoms of avocado sunblotch include discoloured and depressed stem streaks, grooves on older branches, lesions and discolouration of the fruit, and a variety of foliar symptoms. Some infected trees remain symptomless. Symptoms are influenced by host cultivar, the environment and the strain of the viroid agent.

What should I look for?

The most consistent initial symptom of sunblotch infection is the appearance of narrow white, yellow or pink streaks on the surface of green twigs or young stems. Fruit produced from infected trees usually develop sunken white, yellow or pink blotches or streaks and are usually small, deformed and unmarketable. The bark on the trunk or larger branches can have a rectangular cracked appearance.

How does it spread?

Avocado sunblotch has no known insect vector and the principal means of transmission is in seed used to propagate rootstocks, in scion material used for grafting, and via root grafts. Sunblotch can be transmitted on sap-contaminated pruning blades, harvesting clippers and injection equipment. It can be transmitted in pollen, but only the developing fruit, and not the fruit-bearing tree, are infected.



David Rosen, University of California Statewide IPM Project

Fruit from infected trees are small and deformed with sunken lesions



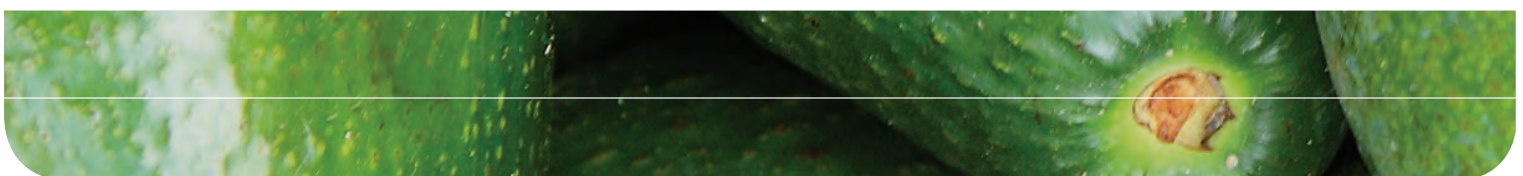
David Rosen, University of California Statewide IPM Project

Fruit is discoloured, showing sunken white/yellow blotches



Andrew Gaering (CAAFI)

Foliage is discoloured and deformed





Where is it now?

Avocado sunblotch was first recorded in California in 1932 and has subsequently been reported in most avocado-growing areas. It is possible that the disease is more widespread because of symptom variability and the presence of symptomless carriers of the causal agent. It is considered a minor problem in countries where tree registration programs exclude the pathogen from propagating material.

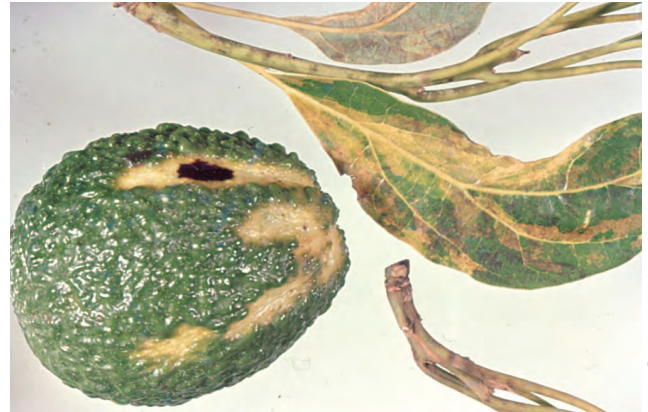
It has been recorded in Australia but has limited distribution.

How can I protect my orchard from Avocado sunblotch?

Source plant material only from clean, accredited suppliers, and preferably material that is certified. Check your orchard frequently for the presence of new pests and unusual symptoms. Make sure you are familiar with common avocado diseases so you can tell if you see something different.

If you see anything unusual, call the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline

**EXOTIC PLANT PEST HOTLINE
1800 084 881**



Yellow streaks and blotches occur on fruit and leaves

Tony Cooke, DEEDI



Sunblotch on Hass avocado fruit

Tony Cooke, DEEDI



Trees may be stunted and exhibit a sprawling prostrate architecture

Ken Pegg, DEEDI

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