

## CHERRY SHOT HOLE

### **Symptoms**

Affected trees are in the *Prunus* genus, which includes both ornamental and edible Cherries and Plums as well as peaches, apricots and nectarines.

Small red/purple brown circles on young leaves expand and turn dark brown as the leaf matures before dying and dropping out leaving multiple holes – giving the impression that somebody has been standing under the tree and firing upwards with a shotgun.

Spots may occasionally form on developing fruit of apricots and peaches leaving a rough, corky area of skin.

### **Biology**

The fungus *Stigmata carpophila* that is one of the causes of shot hole survives the dormant season inside leaf buds and in twig lesions. The spores produced on lesions can remain alive for several months. They are spread by splashing rain or irrigation water. Spores that land on twigs, buds, blossoms, or young leaves require 24 hours of continuous wetness to cause infection which makes the weather an important variable in the appearance of the disease each year.

### **Control**

Assist with the general health of the tree by regular feeding (foliar feeding where possible) and keep an eye on the watering too. Some susceptibility to shot hole is a result of unfavourable soil conditions – particularly waterlogging.

Although a severe infection may be unsightly there is little evidence of harm caused to trees by the problem. In minor cases we recommend allowing nature to take its course, with a little attention to cleanliness – clearing away fallen leaf matter quickly and disposing them where the spores cannot return to cause a problem in the future. Where severe infections occur fungicides would traditionally be applied however no products are currently licensed specifically for shot hole.

