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## **SOOTY MOULD (*Capnodium* spp)**



*FUNGAL ATTACK ON  
COFFEE LEAVES*



# SOOTY MOULD AND ITS CHARACTERISTICS

Sooty mould is often not noticed until a large number of leaves are covered with a black sooty substance. This is not really a disease, but a black fungal coating on leaves. Sooty mould is an indicator that there is an insect problem on the plant. The insects feeding on the plant are excreting a sugary substance called "honeydew". The fungus doesn't feed on plant tissue but on these secretions from the insects that are feeding on the plant.

## SOOTY MOULD:

-Develop on the excretion of scale insects

-Also on excretions of chewing insects that feed on leaves

Branches or fruits

-Thus form a thin black film

## The fungus:

- \* does not directly damage the leaves
- \* It however, limits the passage of light and air
- \* Thus it decreases plant vigor
- \* Is associated with ants and scales

These sucking pests take in large amounts of sap. Much of the water and sugars in the sap pass through the insect and onto the leaf. Rain usually will wash this residue off. If there is insufficient rain then the "honeydew" sticks to the leaf.

## CONTROL

To control sooty mould:

- first control the aphids, scales or other pests that are creating the honeydew.
- aphids can often be washed off by a strong spray of water from the hose.
- This action may also wash off some of the "honeydew" and sooty mould.
- Remaining sooty mould will eventually dry up and flake off the leaves.
- Shell white oil/Orchard oil at 4 litres per 200 litres of water is also effective