TERATOSPHAERIA LEAF SPOT

The disease was previously known as Mycosphaerella leaf blotch (MLB)

Causal agents: *Teratosphaeria* species, previously known as *Mycosphaerella* species. Includes several species of which *T. nubilosa* is the most common on cold-tolerant eucalypt species. *Teratosphaeria suttonii* is common on all other eucalypt species.

Hosts: *Eucalyptus* species

Geographic distribution: Entire South Africa, Swaziland and other African countries

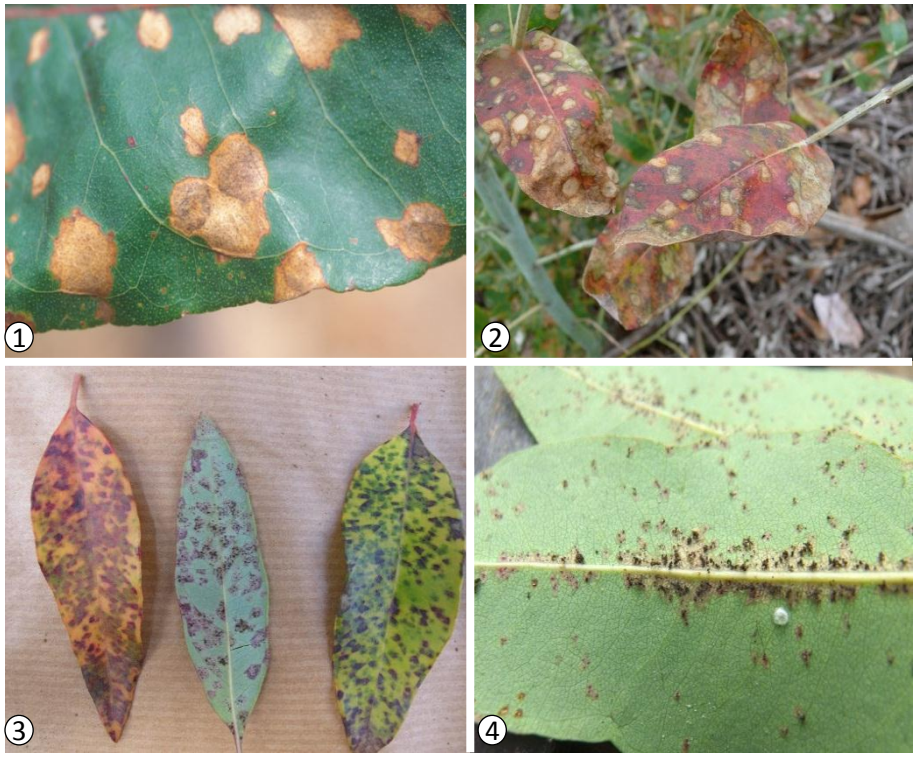
Relative importance: *Teratosphaeria nubilosa* causes and important disease of cold-tolerant eucalypt species in South Africa. This disease may result in complete defoliation of susceptible species/provenances. *Eucalyptus nitens*, especially, is susceptible to this pathogen. Several other Teratosphaeria species have been reported from various eucalypts in South Africa, mostly resulting in isolated spots on leaves. Of these, *T. suttonii* is the most common, and least damaging, occurring mostly on older leaves and on stressed trees.

Symptoms and signs: Disease caused by *T. nubilosa* and other *Teratosphaeria* species often start as isolated, brown spots, often round/oval in shape (Fig. 1). Older spots may have small, black fruiting bodies in their centres. Disease caused by *T. nubilosa* starts on leaves just above soil level and progressively moves up in the canopy, and may eventually kill the entire leaf (Fig. 2) and result in complete defoliation.

Spots caused by *T. suttonii* often start as purple spots, square in size, on older leaves (Fig. 3). These may have masses of black spores exuding from the underside of the leaves (Fig. 4). In some cases the black spores may exude from the leaf in the absence of distinct spots (Fig. 4).

Biology: *Teratosphaeria* species requires high relative humidity (>90%) for spore germination. They survive on fallen leaf litter under trees, from where they re-infect trees in wet periods.

Management: Selection and breeding. Less susceptible provenances of *E. nitens* exist for planting.



(1) Individual leaf spots, with black fruiting bodies, on a eucalypt leaf, caused by *T. nubilosa*, (2) multiple leaf spots and leaf mortality, caused by *T. nubilosa* , (3) square shaped, purple leaf spots casued by *T. suttonii*, (4) black spores of *T. suttonii* exuding from the underside of an infected eucalypt leaf.

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