



(Photo taken by C. Kemp, Department Parks and Wildlife, Busselton).
Peppermint tree in decline.

Signs and symptoms of Peppermint tree decline:

Since the early 2000's there has been evidence of peppermint tree decline emerging in the South West. There are various signs and symptoms of decline occurring, some are listed below:

1. Leaves looking like they have been cut in half – grazing by Western Ringtail Possums. These peppermints should recover. If not, place collars on base of trees, prune trees back from other trees to give them a rest from feeding pressures. Plant more peppermint trees to reduce grazing pressures and provide more food source for WRP.
2. Canopy leaves browning off – near the coast? After heavy winds in winter – likely to be wind/salt scald, especially if only effecting one side of the tree. These peppermints should recover over time.
3. Canopy leaves browning off – inland areas. Frost can be a contributor, these peppermints should recover. In some cases in intense heat, sun scald can also be a cause.
4. Purplish or reddish looking “dots” over the leaves, this is likely to be due to insect attack – most likely thrips.

5. Pathogens attacking the trees, either *Phytophthora multivora* or other pathogen, sometimes *Phytophthora multivora* will combine with *Phytophthora cinnamomii* – testing will confirm.
6. Borers – you can see the borer holes in the trees (these quite often come after the tree has become ill in health). Treat with insecticide injection into the holes.
7. Note – not in WA as yet, although Peppermint trees should be monitored for the introduction/spread of Myrtle Rust, which shows initially as yellow pollen looking material covering leaves.



Photo taken by C. Kemp, Department Parks and Wildlife.
Whole trees dying, in this circumstance – due to a) overgrazing by western ringtail possums and b) due to climate change with the addition of c) *Phytophthora multivora*.

Some peppermint tree leaves will die over a period of months or years, drop all their leaves and the whole tree will die. This may be drought due to climate change, or may be due to a pathogen.

What can we be doing?

Contact the local Off Reserve Officer or Centre for Excellence in forest health for further advice. Department Parks and Wildlife – 97525533 or www.foresthealth.com.au

1. Potassium phosphonate applications – injection. (Phytophthora spp)
2. Acecap 97® - systemic insecticide – injection. (Borers or other insects)
3. Medicap – nutrient plugs – drill hole into trees and place the plugs into the tree. (Improve the overall health of the tree).
4. Products all available from Arborcarbon. www.arborcarbon.com.au
5. Watering of peppermint trees assists in their overall health, if in garden situations.



Photo taken by C. Kemp, Department Parks and Wildlife.
Thrip damage on peppermint leaves.



Peppermint leaves affected by thrips (southern corner) and nutrient deficiency (full page).

Written by Cherie Kemp, Off Reserve Conservation Officer,
Department Parks and Wildlife, Busselton.