

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Managing Olive Plant Pests

Associate Professor Robert Spooner-Hart from the Centre for Plants and the Environment is researching which environmentally friendly pesticides should be used by Australia's olive industry to control pests and diseases. This research has been funded by The Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation.

'Currently in Australia there are a limited number of environmentally-friendly pesticides available to control pests and disease within the olive industry' explains Prof. Spooner-Hart. 'Research has been conducted on how to control some of the pests (e.g. the black scale) that affect olives however, many insects (including the olive lace bug) have not been studied and we don't have effective controls for them. It's not only pests that are affecting the olive industry disease is becoming more common owing to a lack of effective protection available for olive trees and fruit. New research is particularly needed to study the selection and timing of pesticide and fungicide applications in olive groves, to maintain a productive olive industry which uses effective pesticides which are safe to humans and the environment'.

This research will be conducted through laboratory bioassays and field trials to generate data for the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicine Authority (APVMA). A number of sites throughout Australia's olive production areas will be used to test different pesticides and their effectiveness on olive lace bug and olive fruit rots. Different types of pesticides will be trialled over three seasons in order to gather the most comprehensive data. Once the trials are complete, the data will be analysed and provided to the APVMA, to seek registration of the most suitable pesticides.



Effective pest and disease control measures are necessary to ensure a healthy Australian olive crop every year. This research aims to provide evidence that will assist the olive industry to operate in a way that is commercially viable, efficient and ecologically sustainable – with all the attendant health and economic benefits that will flow from such an approach.

Project Title: Evaluation of key chemicals for pest management in the olive industry

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Contact Details: r.spooner-hart@uws.edu.au
http://www.uws.edu.au/centre_for_plants_and_the_environment

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