

Peach Leaf Curl

(*Taphrina deformans*)

July, 2018

Peach leaf curl is a fungal disease of peach and nectarine. It is favoured by prolonged wet, cool weather in the spring as new growth is developing.

Symptoms

Infected leaves become thick and curled with red and yellow discoloration. Infected leaves eventually drop. Heavy leaf infection and defoliation may reduce crop and tree vigour.

Fruit may also be infected, although this is much less common. Fruit lesions are slightly raised, reddish and wrinkled in appearance.

Life Cycle

Leaves are only susceptible to leaf curl infection between bud break and petal fall. Fruit can also be infected following long rainy periods for a short time following petal fall.

Young leaves are infected by blastospores (yeast-like spores) that survive and multiply on tree surfaces. During early spring, rising temperatures and wet weather allow the fungus to multiply and infect buds and emerging leaves. Leaf symptoms typically appear about 3 weeks after infection, but this can vary depending on temperature.

For the remainder of the season the leaf curl fungus survives and multiplies on leaf and tree surfaces and becomes part of the normal mycoflora of the tree.

Management

Chemical Control in Commercial Orchards

For good control it is essential that fungicides be applied before the buds break. Recommended fungicides include a dormant spray of Bravo ZN (chlorothalonil), Syllit 400 (dodine), ferbam, or lime-sulphur before bud development begins in the spring.

If leaf curl has been an issue, a spray of fixed copper or Bravo after harvest in September is also recommended. Apply at 75-100% leaf drop with good coverage of tree surfaces.

Cultural Control

Sanitation, such as removal of infected leaves, is not effective for control of leaf curl.

No variety is immune to leaf curl, but 'Redhaven' and most varieties derived from 'Redhaven' have some tolerance.

Sheltering peach and nectarine trees from the rain may reduce disease severity on backyard trees.



Leaf curl symptoms on peach leaves



Leaf curl infected trees



Orchard with severe peach leaf curl