

PLANT DISEASE CONTROL NOTES

EXTENSION DIVISION • VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

FRUIT DISEASES PEACH LEAF CURL

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Peach leaf curl, a fungus disease, is found throughout the world where peaches are grown. In the United States, the disease is of economic importance in all peach growing regions except the semiarid section of the southwest. The disease is destructive and causes economic losses under Virginia growing conditions.

Peach leaf curl is carried overwinter by tiny fungus spores lodged on the surface of twigs and bud scales of the peach or nectarine trees. With the coming of spring and the swelling of the buds, if conditions of moisture and temperature are suitable, the spores germinate, and those that come into contact with the young developing leaves cause an infection. The infected leaves are thickened, and as they develop the leaf becomes folded with the edges curling inward, so that the undersurface of the leaf is a series of concaved chambers. Very shortly after leaf symptoms appear, it turns red to purple and becomes extremely conspicuous. The bright color soon fades into a yellowish brown to brown, and the leaf withers and falls off.

The actual loss caused by peach leaf curl is defoliation, which, in turn, induces failure of the tree to hold and develop its fruit. Further loss is caused through devitalization of the trees, making them more susceptible to winter injury and other disease causing fungi.

RECOMMENDED CONTROL

Leaf curl can be effectively and economically controlled with one application of a suitable fungicide during the dormant season. If sprays are applied at the correct time with the correct fungicide, almost perfect control can be accomplished. The spray application should be made



Leaf curl on peach leaves. Note the thickening and curling of the leaves.

after the majority of the leaves have fallen but before hard freezing weather or in the spring before the buds break. All buds and twigs must be covered with the spray to provide satisfactory control.

Use one of the following fungicides:

FERBAM: Use 2.0 lbs. ferbam 76% WP per 100 gals. or 2 tablespoons per gallon of spray.

OR

LIQUID LIME SULFUR: Use 4 gals. liquid lime sulfur per 100 gals. of spray, or for small quantities, use 1/3 pint for each gal. of spray.

CAUTION: When liquid lime sulfur is used, thoroughly clean the spray tank and pump before storing equipment.

OR

BORDEAUX MIXTURE: Use 2.0 lbs. copper sulfate plus 4 lbs. hydrate lime (Bordeaux mixture) per 100 gals. of water, or for small quantities, use 2 tablespoons copper sulfate plus 4 tablespoons hydrated lime for each gal. of spray.

CAUTION: When bordeaux mixture is used, thoroughly clean the spray tank and pump before storing equipment.

Trade and brand names are used only for the purpose of information and the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service does not guarantee nor warrant the standard of the product, nor does it imply approval of the product to the exclusion of others which may also be suitable.

KEYS TO PROPER USE OF PESTICIDES

1. Read the label on each pesticide container before each use. Follow instructions to the letter; heed all cautions and warnings, and note precautions about residues.
2. Keep pesticides in the containers in which you bought them. Put them where children or animals cannot get to them, preferably under lock and away from food, feed, seed, or other material that may become harmful if contaminated.
3. Dispose of empty containers in the manner specified on the label.

SEE YOUR DOCTOR IF SYMPTOMS OF ILLNESS OCCUR DURING OR AFTER USE OF PESTICIDES.

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