

Peach Tree Care Through the Year

(though written for peach trees, you can also apply the information to plum trees)

Mid May to late December gardeners should rake and remove leaves that are infected with pathogenic fungi. If left beneath plant, spores will be produced that are carried back up into plant and cause additional disease problems. Do not place infected leaves in compost pile because they can cause problems next year. During growing season, foliage and twigs infected with bacterial pathogen should be pruned and diseased tissue placed in plastic bag to be sent to landfill. When cutting twigs, shears should be cleaned with 1-10 bleach solution. This will control bacteria that would be on pruning shears after diseased twig was cut. By controlling diseased twigs, source of leaf infection will be reduced or completely controlled. Leaves infected with bacterium can be placed in compost pile. However, if not able to tell the difference between fungal or bacterial infection, it is best to send material to landfill. Use of copper fungicide is suggested only for peaches that are infected with bacterial canker. No other use is suggested for this product at this time.

December or January is time to get rid of scale insects. Use *dormant oil spray* and apply according to label directions. Watch air temperature (not below 45°) and apply only when temperature is correct based on label. Object is to cover entire exposed tree surface with oil and smother insects. Adding an insecticide, such as *Malathion* will improve control. Follow label directions on pesticide container for mixing instructions and compatibility of pesticides.

March to Harvest is time to really stay after insects and diseases that will destroy your fruit, make them unsightly or provide nursery for insect larva. Most publications use terms like: pink bud, petal fall, shuck split, first cover, second cover, etc. to help time your spray schedule. For all practical purposes, start spraying when you see first pink buds and spray every 2 weeks until harvest. Stop correct number of days before harvest indicated on pesticide and fungicide labels. One exception – Do Not spray when buds are in full bloom. This will avoid killing bees and other beneficial insects pollinating your fruit.

