

Declared out of print June 2013.

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PLANT DISEASES

CORYNEUM BLIGHT OF STONE FRUITS

Coryneum blight is a common disease of apricots and peaches that sometimes occurs on sweet cherries. It disfigures the fruit, and on peaches, it also causes severe cankers on the branches. It may also affect leaves, buds, and blossoms, but the reduction of fruit quality and death of shoots and branches is usually most serious.

Disease Symptoms

On peach and apricot, the most distinctive symptom is small purple-brown spots on the fruit (Fig. 1). The spots have light centers. They later become raised and roughened and are usually more numerous on the upper side. On cherries, there may only be a single large brown spot on the side of the fruit.

On peach twigs, infection first

appears as small, purplish, raised spots that later elongate to form rough brown or black cankers. These cankers may girdle and kill the twig. They are gummy and often have a glistening, varnished appearance (Fig. 2). They frequently start at a bud.

The fungus causing Coryneum blight has been given several scientific names but probably is best known as *Coryneum beijerinckii*. Small, pimplelike fruiting structures are produced at the edges of cankers. In these, the dark brown, 4- to 6-celled spores are formed. The spores are readily spread by rain washing over the canker. When a spore is washed onto a susceptible plant, it becomes firmly attached by its sticky coating. The cells in a spore send out slender

germ tubes that penetrate the outer tissues of the host plant. The fungus then develops inside the affected host and eventually produces spores to repeat the cycle. Spores are produced from the time the trees bloom until after the leaves fall.

Control

The most effective and economical control is fungicidal sprays. Sev-



Fig. 1. Spots with light-colored centers are characteristic of Coryneum blight on fruit of peaches and apricots.



Fig. 2. Cankers form on peach branches.

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eral chemicals, including Bordeaux mixture or other fixed copper, chlorothalonil and captan have been used to control *Coryneum* blight. See EB0419, *Crop Protection Guide for Tree Fruits in Washington*, for current spray recommendations. Where the disease is severe, apply sprays at dormant, delayed-dormant or prebloom, shuck fall (when blossoms fall from the developing fruit), after harvest, and leaf fall. Pruning out dead and cankered twigs and branches may also be helpful in reducing the number of spores produced.

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

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▲Use pesticides with care. Apply them only to plants, animals, or sites listed on the label. When mixing and applying pesticides, follow all label precautions to protect yourself and others around you. It is a violation of the law to disregard label directions. If pesticides are spilled on skin or clothing, remove clothing and wash skin thoroughly. Store pesticides in their original containers and keep them out of the reach of children, pets, and livestock.

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