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Jack Riesselman

David Wysong

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Riesselman, Jack and Wysong, David, "EC73-1859 Peach Diseases" (1973). *Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension*. 4222.
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PEACH DISEASES

EC 73-1859

By Jack Riesselman
Extension Assistant
David S. Wysong
Extension Plant Pathologist

1. PEACH DISEASE PROBLEM: The injury illustrated in this picture may be caused by one or more pathogens; however, the symptoms are characteristic of a disease called Perennial Canker. This disease is caused by either of two related fungi, *Cytospora cincta* or *C. leucostoma.* Both organisms cause an oval to linear, depressed canker on the limbs or trunk of the tree. Frequently a resinous gum is associated with the canker. These cankers enlarge from year to year, eventually girdling the limb or trunk and thus causing death. Infection is through damaged or injured bark resulting from cold weather injury, pruning wounds, mechanical damage, insect punctures or animal-induced scars. Maintaining healthy trees through a good cultural program is the key to preventing Perennial Canker. If cankers develop they should be eradicated by pruning as soon as growth begins in the spring. Treatment of the pruning wounds with a recommended tree paint aids in preventing new infections.

2. BLAST: The name "Blast" or "Short Life" is a term used to describe a variety of adverse environmental, climatic and cultural relationships which determine the health and subsequent life of peach trees. Even though a variety of factors are incriminated as a multiple cause for short life, the ultimate killing factor in most instances is cold weather. In Nebraska, peach and other fruit trees should be protected from prevailing winter winds which cause winter drying. Protection may be in the form of hills, buildings or trees planted for windbreads. Young plantings should be wrapped to protect against cold winds and rodent injury.

3. ROOT ROT: Root rots of peach are common throughout the stone fruit-growing regions of North America. Several fungi cause root rots, either singularly or as a complex with other fungi. Trees suffering from root rots appear weakened or unthrifty. Affected trees show early reddening of their foliage in the fall and reduced terminal growth. In more advance stages one or more scaffold limbs may die followed by death of the entire tree. There are no suitable controls for root rot once the disease is established. Maintaining healthy trees through good cultural practices aids in preventing this problem.

PEACH SCAB: (4 & 7) *Cladosporium carpophilum.* Peach scab is a relatively minor disease in Nebraska. However, severe attacks may occur in some years if fungicide applications are not made early in the season. The disease is most often observed on the fruits but it may also be found on twigs and new shoots. Early infections on the fruit appear as small, greenish, circular spots, later darkening with age. These spots generally do not appear until the fruits are half grown. The spots tend to be concentrated at the stem end. Severe infections may cause cracking which allows the entrance of secondary rot organisms. Lesions on twigs are oval, light brown which darken with age. Similar spots may also develop on the leaves. This disease also attacks apricots causing injuries similar to those found on peaches. Peach scab can be effectively controlled by following a fungicidal spray program during the early part of the growing season. Do not spray within 40 days of harvest.

BACTERIAL SPOT: (5 & 8). *Xanthomonas pruni.* Several varieties of peach, apricot and plum are susceptible to this organism. The disease causes severe defoliation which weakens the trees, and fruit spotting which makes the fruit undesirable. It is possibly the most common disease of peach and apricot in Nebraska. The bacteria attack the leaves, fruit and occasionally the tender growing shoots. Leaf lesions are initially small, watersoaked spots on the underside of the leaf, which later enlarge, eventually causing the leaves to turn yellow and fall. Fruit infections cause a severe spotting and if the infection occurs early in the season the spots may develop into deep pits. These fruit lesions often show gumming. The primary method of preventing bacterial spot is through the use of resistant varieties. Bacterial spot problems can also be reduced by locating new plantings away from older ones containing susceptible varieties. A fruit spray program helps suppress bacterial spot.

BROWN ROT: (6 & 9). *Monilinia fructicola.* Brown rot is a destructive fungus disease of peach, apricot, plum and cherry in Nebraska. The disease reduces yields by infecting blossoms, twigs and fruit. Infected blossoms wilt, turn brown, and often persist into the summer. Small depressed cankers occur on the twigs which under favorable conditions may cause a die-back. Fruit decay is the most noticeable symptom of the disease. It is most severe on mature fruit, initially forming small brown lesions which enlarge rapidly and often become enveloped by ash-gray tufts of fungus growth. Infected fruits may become mummified and remain on the tree thus providing a source of inoculum for future crops. Control of brown rot starts with removal of all infected fruit, mummies and infected twigs following the last picking. A spray program, initiated early in the spring, is also necessary to prevent blossom infections. This program should be continued through the summer to reduce decay of mature fruit.

Issued February 1973, 2000

EXTENSION SERVICE, UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE COOPERATING WITH THE
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND THE COLLEGE OF HOME ECONOMICS
E. F. FROLIK, DEAN J. L. ADAMS, DIRECTOR

PEACH DISEASES

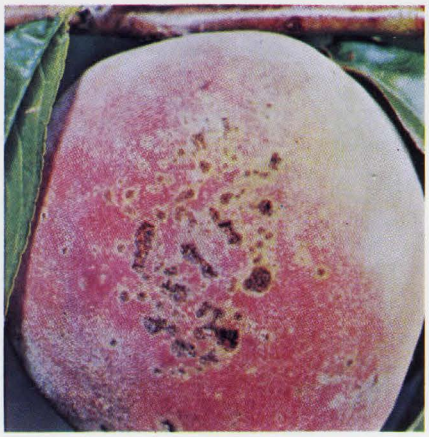
An Aid to Identification and Control

1. PEACH DISEASE PROBLEM

2. BLAST ON LOWER TRUNK

3. ROOT ROT

4. SCAB ON FRUIT



5. BACTERIAL SPOT ON FRUIT

6. BROWN ROT ON FRUIT

7. SCAB ON TWIG

8. BACTERIAL LEAF SPOT

9. BROWN ROT BLOSSOM BLIGHT

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