Peach Diseases: An Aid to Identification and Control

Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service
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
PEACH DISEASES
An Aid to Identification and Control

1. PEACH DISEASE PROBLEM. Decline of young peach trees can be caused by many factors, e.g. winter injury, poor site location, nematodes and root rot. In Indiana problems such as that illustrated in Figure 1 are invariably the result of “wet feet.” Peach will just not survive in low lying areas with poor drainage and excessive soil moisture. In such cases most peach trees will decline and ultimately die within 3-5 years.

2. BLAST ON LOWER TRUNK. This is primarily a problem in southern peach regions and has not been observed as a serious disease in Indiana.

3. ROOT ROT. Root rot in Indiana is not a major problem except on old trees that have passed the profitably productive age.

4. SCAB ON FRUIT. Peach scab can be a destructive disease, especially when poor timing of sprays or incorrect fungicide usage is practiced. Peach Scab is caused by the fungus Cladosporium carpophilum. It appears as small, distinct, circular spots on the stem end of half grown fruits. Severely infected fruit will usually split when mature.

5. BACTERIAL SPOT ON FRUIT. Peach varieties such as Elberta, Hale, Hale Haven, Sunhigh and Kalhaven are especially subject to this disease. Caused by the bacterium Xanthomonas pruni, it appears on fruit as small, irregular, brown sunken spots on the exposed side of the fruits. Cracking and pitting usually occur near the bacterial lesions as a consequence of natural fruit enlargement. Running together of individual spots results in extensive lesions. Gummy exudate is frequently produced from bacterial spot infections.

6. BROWN ROT. One of the easiest peach diseases to identify. Characteristic symptoms usually appear as fruit is approaching maturity. The first evidence of brown rot on fruit is a small light-brown spot that enlarges rapidly and ultimately involves the entire fruit. Infected areas become covered with masses of spores of the brown rot fungus Monilinia fructicola.

7. SCAB ON TWIGS. Lesions on twigs caused by peach scab occur on the current year’s growth as oval lesions 1/8 to 1/4 inch in diameter and light to dark brown in color.

8. BACTERIAL LEAF SPOT. Typical symptom is the appearance of angular dead spots, usually at the tip of the leaves. Usually infected tissue falls out resulting in a “buckshot” appearance.

9. BROWN ROT BLOSSOM BLIGHT. This is the early season stage of the brown rot disease on mature fruit. Peach blossoms infected with brown rot turn brown, shivel and dry up. The causal fungus will grow from infected blossoms into the twigs resulting in a twig canker and terminal blight.