



Peach Leaf Curl



Peach leaf curl (*Taphrina deformans*) is a fungal disease that causes leaves on peaches and nectarines to pucker and curl turning from reddish to yellow to gray and then falling off. It can sometimes also cause some disfigurement and drop of fruit, but this is less common. The fungus overwinters on the surface of infected twigs and spreads on water droplets in spring during temperatures ranging from 50-70 degrees during bud swell and bud break. Infected trees are weakened and extra attention should be paid to fertilization, irrigation, and thinning fruit load.

Month	Tasks	Observations & Dates Completed
Jan - Feb	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prune fruit trees during dormant period to open up the tree to sunlight and air circulation. Check out the POP Pruning Guide for more information on winter fruit tree pruning. 2. Remove fruit mummies during weekly orchard walk throughs and prunings, ideally before bud break. Pick up mummified or infected fruit from orchard floor and dispose immediately. 3. Spray a copper fungicide like Cueva or biofungicide like Serenade before bud swell. Spray trunk and branches until dripping to ensure sufficient coverage. Please read labels carefully before application and wear protective gear. You can read more about biofungicides on the POP Blog. Note: Biofungicides are a preventative measure and cannot be applied to already injured fruit or leaves. 	
Mar - Apr	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Infected trees often drop infected leaves (May and June) and regrow new ones causing a need for plenty of nitrogen. Spreading compost or applying fish emulsion can help. Apply holistic sprays such as compost tea, Effective Microbes, and/or neem oil for tree immunity support every two weeks from late March to early May. 2. Continue orchard sanitation by removing fruit mummies on both the trees and dropped on the orchard floor. 	



Month	Tasks	Observations & Dates Completed
May - Jun	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Infected trees are weakened and their fruit load should be thinned accordingly to not overstress the tree. When fruitlets on stone fruit such as peaches are about 3/4 inch, thin fruitlets to increase light and air circulation and reduce rate of infection from fruits too closely touching. Peaches should be thinned about 8" apart (if you have squirrels, thin to 4"). You can read more about thinning on the POP blog. 2. The first visible signs of Peach Leaf Curl usually occur at the beginning of May. Once you see it, you have already missed your spray window for effectively treating. The main goal should be mitigating stress. Plenty of nutrients, low fruit load, sufficient and consistent irrigation. 	
Oct - Dec	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. During weekly orchard walk throughs, remove and dispose of any remaining "fruit mummies" on trees. Peach leaf curl spreads from the gray spores on leaves on the wind to branch surfaces where it overwinters. For prevention, apply neem or fermented teas to branches and around base of tree to help reduce spores. 2. Spray a copper fungicide like Cueva or biofungicide like Serenade in the fall after leaf drop. Spray branches thoroughly until dripping to ensure sufficient coverage. 	

Resources Used:

[Monthly Orchard Task List](#) — [Peach Leaf Curl in the Home Fruit Planting \(Penn State Extension\)](#) — [Biofungicides for Orchards](#) — [Peach Leaf Curl: Biology and Control \(Rutgers\)](#)