

## Common Fruit Tree Pests

### **Codling Moth** (*Cydia pomonella*)

See Yavapai County Bulletin #10: Codling Moth.

### **Plum Curculio** (*Conotrachelus nenuphar*)

This adult weevil causes injury to fruit of apple, nectarine, plum, cherry, peach, apricot, pear, and quince during April and May. The wounds resulting from feeding and egg laying by the over-wintering beetles appear as crescent shaped scars. Internal injury to the fruit occurs from larval burrowing; most of these fruit will drop to the ground in June.

Homeowners can control the pest by jarring the sluggish beetles from the trees in the morning and capturing them on sheets. Destroying all infested fruits that fall to the ground is helpful. Cultivation of the soil containing the pupae destroys many of them.

### **Two Spotted Spider Mite** (*Tetranychus urticae*)

This arthropod is a pest on deciduous fruit trees worldwide. In mid-to late summer mites move up the tree trunks or to low hanging apple branches in contact with ground vegetation. Apple foliage usually becomes bronzed or brown as a result of mite attacks. Mites also spin a fine silken web over many infested leaves. The mites do not feed on the fruit itself.

Monitor trees by checking ten leaves per tree for the presence of this mite during mid-to late summer. Select leaves from lower shoots and water sprouts. Treatment is necessary if there is an average of 6 two spotted spider mites per leaf. Washing the leaves with a solution of soapy water may help control this pest.

### **Woolly Apple Aphid** (*Erisoma lanigerum*)

This insect lives on apples trees throughout the year in Arizona. In other parts of the country, the aphid has a complicated life cycle which includes a stage on American elm and winged forms.

Aphids are present nearly year round on the roots. Look for white cottony masses, which cover purplish aphids, clustered in wounds on the trunk and branches of the tree or on large knots on the roots. The underground aphids do the damage; the injury consists of swollen enlargements on the roots. These increase in size from year to year because of the feeding of the aphids.

Monitor for this pest by checking trees in the spring and fall for aerial colonies. Remove above-ground aphids promptly to prevent further root infestation.

### **San Jose Scale** (*Quadraspidiotus perniciosus*)

This pest occurs on deciduous fruit trees and woody ornamentals. The insect increases most rapidly in hot, dry weather. In the summer each generation (2 per growing season) is completed in 5 to 7 weeks. Because the species multiplies so rapidly, the scale may kill a young tree or shrub in 2 or 3 years; older trees withstand the attack longer. The scale does not confine its attack to the bark of the tree but also infests the leaves and fruit. On fruit and young bark, the scale produces a conspicuous red spot.

Check trees for the crawler stage 7 to 10 days after petal fall. This stage is effectively controlled with superior oil.

### **Pear Slug** (*Caliroa cerasi*)

The larval stage of this insect, which has two generations per growing season, skeletonizes leaves of pear, cherry, and plum trees. The second generation, which usually occurs in late July and August, causes most of the damage.

Examine leaves in the spring at full leaf and in July. The "slugs" are controlled with a hard stream of water.

### **Pear Blister Mite** (*Phytoptus pyri*)

Look for brownish blisters on undersides of pear and apple leaves. On pear, the blisters appear as small greenish pimples that soon take on a reddish color and then turn brown. On apple, the first stages are pale yellowish and the blisters never become as red as on pear. You can see many small mites with a hand lens.

Early feeding of the mites on the developing fruit causes depressed russet spots, which can be the most serious aspect of the pest. The fruit is often misshapen and deformed.

Control this pest with dormant application of oil emulsion sprays.

**Peach Tree Borer** (*Synanthedon exitiosa*)

See Yavapai County Bulletin #29: Peach Tree Borer

**Peach Twig Borer** (*Anarsia lineatella*)

This insect attacks peach, plum, apricot, and almond trees. When growth of the tree begins in the spring, the larvae of this moth emerge and bore into twigs and buds. Their activity stops growth or kills the shoot. Second and third generations feed in the fruit. This insect is not a problem in trees that are sprayed each year at the delayed dormant period.

**Leaf-footed Plant Bugs and Stink Bugs**

Plant bugs and stink bugs vary greatly in color, size and shape. They feed by sucking sap from plants. Their feeding is very destructive to developing fruit. If the damaged fruit does not fall from the tree, it becomes scarred and malformed as it grows. This is called "catfacing" injury. Cold weather may cause similar injury. Most severe catfacing is done in the period immediately following bloom.

Most sucking insects that attack such trees as peach and nectarine overwinter as adults in protected places, such as in the ground debris or between the leaves of various plants. Some control may be obtained by destroying overwintering sites as well as destroying legumes and other broad-leaf weeds that serve as hosts for sucking bugs. White or yellow sticky traps may be placed in trees.

**Thrips**

Thrips are general feeders. They sometimes invade fruit trees when nearby weeds and native plants become unavailable as a food source. Adult thrips are slender, yellow to black insects, less than 1/12 inch long. Nymphs are creamy white. Both nymphs and adults feed by rasping or scraping plant tissue with their mouthparts and sucking plant juices. They attack the buds and blossoms of fruit trees in the early spring. Early symptoms of thrips include: distorted young leaves, foliage flecked with yellow, deformed buds. To determine if you have thrips, shake damaged plant part over white paper; tiny yellow or brown insects will fall out. Damage often is not noticeable until the fruit enlarges, and scarring or russetting of fruit surfaces is visible.

To control, placing yellow sticky traps in trees, spray with neem oil, or spray with a home remedy of 1 gallon water, 1 TBSP non-detergent dish washing liquid or baby shampoo, and 2 drops vegetable oil. Spray in the evening; it may take several applications.

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Adapted from: Common Fruit Tree Pests, Angus J. Howitt, Dept of Entomology, Michigan State University Ext, NCR 1993. Includes information from Yavapai County Bulletin #28., Miscellaneous Pests of Peaches and Nectarines.

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