

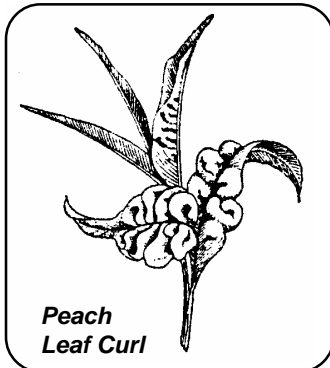
# HOME GROUNDS FACT SHEET

CORNELL Cooperative Extension  
Nassau County



Nassau County  
Horticulture Program  
Eisenhower Park  
East Meadow, NY 11554  
516 228-0426

## Peach Leaf Curl



Peach leaf curl is a springtime disease of peach, nectarine, almond and related ornamental species caused by the fungus *Taphrina deformans*. This disease is common in unsprayed orchards. Peach leaf curl is not serious except in wet years when it can cause defoliation of unsprayed

trees early in the growing season. This weakens the trees making them more susceptible to winter injury.

*Taphrina deformans* can infect leaves, fruit and young twigs. Infected leaves become distorted, puckered and thickened, initially with a distinct reddish or purple coloration. As infection progresses, affected leaves turn gray with a powdery appearance as a result of the production of fungal spores on the leaf surface. Shortly thereafter, these leaves turn yellow or brown and drop. Fruit that becomes infected tends to drop shortly after infection occurs. Infected twigs are swollen and stunted, usually with deformed leaves at their tips.

Spores produced on the leaf surface by the fungus are washed or wind blown onto peach twigs and buds. They remain lodged in bud scales or crevices in the bark throughout the summer and following winter. These spores germinate in the spring during periods of frequent rain as the buds are just opening. If rains do not occur at this time, the spores remain inactive and little or no infection occurs. Only juvenile plant tissues are susceptible to infection so if no spore germination occurs at bud break, then little damage results for that year. These spores are capable of producing secondary spores known as bud conidia during periods of wet, cool weather. Both spore types can remain inactive for several years on the peach tree until conditions are right for infection to occur. This explains why peach leaf curl can periodically cause severe defoliation even though it was not noticed the previous growing season.

### Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Considerations

IPM is a common sense approach to pest control and plant care. It employs a number of measures to prevent, control or reduce plant problems. These include using resistant plant varieties, proper plant selection and placement, good aftercare and biological and/or mechanical controls. As a last resort, after all other remedies have been explored, a pesticide\* that is least toxic to people and natural predators, can be considered. Prior to using any pesticides, plants should always be monitored for the degree of infestation and a sensible control measure considered.

\* A pesticide is a substance that kills, or attempts to kill, a particular pest, e.g. **insecticide**, **fungicide**, **herbicide**, etc.

Chemical pesticides are available. If you choose to use chemical pesticides, contact your local Cooperative Extension office for specific recommendations.

### N.B. TO CERTIFIED PESTICIDE OPERATORS (CPO)

There may be other restricted use pesticides available to CPOs. Check Cornell Recommends for Trees and Shrubs for the current year.

"This publication contains pesticide recommendations. Changes in pesticide regulations occur constantly and human errors are still possible. Some materials mentioned may no longer be available, and some uses may no longer be legal. All pesticides distributed, sold or applied in New York State must be registered with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Questions concerning the legality and/or registration status for pesticide use in New York State should be directed to the appropriate Cornell Cooperative Extension specialist or your regional DEC office (631) 444-0340. Read the label before applying any pesticide. Cornell Cooperative Extension and its employees assume no liability for the effectiveness or results of any chemicals for pesticide usage. No endorsement of products is made or implied."

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