



Question of the Week

Q: Young peaches are falling from the trees and they have a gooey substance coming out of them. What is causing this and how can I stop it from happening?

A: This could be the work of the Oriental fruit moth. Over the growing season this insect produces several generations. The first generation tunnels into the end of peach twigs, causing them to wilt and die. Later generations feed on fruit and twigs. Larvae will usually enter the fruit from the stem end, or where two fruit touch each other on the tree. Later broods will enter anywhere on the fruit. A gummy substance and “frass” may emerge from the wound area as the larva bores into the fruit. As the gum ages, a sooty mold may grow on it, turning the entire wound area black. This boring can cause the fruit to drop. Damaged fruits that remain on the tree become distorted.

Garden stores and catalogues sell pheromone traps to monitor Oriental fruit moth activity and help gardeners time sprays to control this pest. Place the traps inside the tree at eye level or higher, just before bloom. Backyard growers need only a single trap. Apply an insecticide treatment at petal fall if the traps detect the moths. Follow label directions!

To help control insects and diseases on peaches, plums and other fruits, call the toll-free number below or download UNH Cooperative Extension’s spraying program information sheet <<http://extension.unh.edu/Pubs/HGPubs/HFSS01a.pdf>>.

Got questions? UNH Cooperative Extension's Family, Home & Garden Education Center Info Line offers practical help finding answers for your lawn and garden questions. Call toll free at 1-877-398-4769, M-F, 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., or e-mail us at answers@unh.edu