

Brighton & Hove City Council
Arboricultural Information Note No. 11

Peach Leaf Curl



Peach Leaf Curl is caused by a fungus (*Taphrina deformans*) and is a disease affecting peaches, nectarines, flowering almonds, apricots and ornamental *Prunus*. In spring young leaves develop red and pale green blisters. Later they become curled and swollen with a powdery coating of spores, eventually turning brown, then withering and falling.

Severe attacks weaken trees and may lead to poor cropping and die-back. Spores overwinter in cracks in the bark, on shoots and bud scales (but not on fallen leaves). Attacks are most severe in cold, wet weather. Feed and water affected trees regularly.

Prevention Measures

Leaf curl can be prevented by spraying trees with copper sulphate (Bordeaux mixture) or mancozeb (Dithane) as soon as buds begin to swell (late January) to prevent spores entering developing buds. Spray again in autumn to minimise risk of infection the next season.

A polythene or glass covering for plants grown against a wall or fence can reduce symptom severity; leave in place from January to mid-May.

More resistant Peach (*Prunus persica*) cultivars include 'Avalon Price', 'Red Haven', 'Dixi Red', 'Hylands', 'Robin Redbreast', 'Redwing' and 'Rochester'.

Although numerous spores are produced by the fungus in spring, there is little spread of the disease from affected leaves to healthy ones, so the second flush of leaves usually remains healthy. The fungus dies out on fallen leaves once spores have been released; removing fallen leaves before the bloom of spores appears to minimise the risk of infection the following year.