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DISEASES

Brown Rot on peach

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FIG. 1

Disease Pathogen Name: *Monilinia fructicola*

Pathogen Type: Fungus

Period of Primary Occurrence: spring

- Symptoms first appear in the spring as blossoms open
- Flowers can be blighted any time floral tissue is exposed but are most susceptible at full bloom
- More spores can be produced on this tissue, initiating additional disease cycles during the spring


FIG. 2

Other Plants Affected

- Peaches, nectarines, plums, apricots, and cherries (not grown in the Galveston-Houston area)


FIG. 3

Description / Symptoms

- Brown rot is one of the most important diseases of stone fruits (Fig. 1)
- Diseased flowers wilt, turn brown, and may develop masses of brownish-gray spores (Fig. 7)
- The diseased flowers usually remain attached into the summer (Fig. 2 5)
- Disease develops rapidly on mature fruit and may rot fruit within 48 hours
- Cankers and killed shoots may be colonized by other aggressive canker-causing fungi
- Infected petals may look water soaked, which can be mistaken for frost injury
- Flowers generally collapse as the fungus invades through the pedicel
  Infected flowers often adhere to twigs and spurs through harvest or even winter
- On peaches, the disease spreads into twigs or spurs
- Lesions may remain discrete or may girdle the twig, causing all distal portions to die
- Profuse gumming also may be in these areas
- Fruit symptoms begin as small, dark spots that enlarge rapidly (Fig. 3)
- Production of masses of buff-colored spores is equally rapid in the necrotic area (Fig. 4)


FIG. 4

- Peaches may have concentric rings of gray sporulation as the rot takes a few days to encompass the entire fruit
- Loss or significant loss of crop may result when disease levels are severe


FIG. 5


FIG. 6


FIG. 7

Best Management Practices (BMP)

NON-CHEMICAL CONTROL

- Practice good sanitation — remove all dropped or diseased fruit
- Prune out and remove any cankers and destroy infected twigs and branches
- Remove and destroy all mummified fruit in and around the tree
- Prune to avoid excessive overcrowding of branches to improve air circulation
- Control insects that could wound and injure fruit
- Use moderate amounts of nitrogen fertilizer

CHEMICAL CONTROL

- Apply fungicides during the blossoming period at early pink bud, full bloom, and/or petal fall to control the blossom blight phase

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