Southeastern Regional Peach Newsletter

Volume 2, No. 1 February 2002

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Editors Note

We are in "full swing" for another peach season. In this second issue of our regional newsletter, we have chosen to concentrate on a few issues of timely importance to peach production. Peach scab is one of the diseases for which every producer in the southeast tends to use a different set of controls. We cover a couple of different aspects of scab control, horticultural and pathological. We cover the known biology of the scab organism in some detail for this issue, and we make comment on the scab "state of the art." Important fertilization and herbicide issues are also addressed.

As all of us who work in peach production understand, our work is important, and I am thankful that we are "called" to it. Dostoevsky stated that "if you want to utterly crush a man, just give him work that's of a completely senseless, irrational nature." Though we may sometimes feel "crushed" by the weight of our efforts, the nature of our work is certainly of value -- to our communities and our society. I hope you enjoy this issue, and I hope each of you have a rewarding 2002 peach season.

Phillip M. Brannen
Editor

Focal Points – New Information for the Peach Industry

❈ **Peach tree regulations.** In response to the introduction of Plum Pox Virus in Pennsylvania and Canada, regulatory agencies in both South Carolina and Georgia are currently developing regulations with regard to the import of prunus species, currently not including ornamentals. For additional information, contact Neil Ogg (SC) at nogg@clemson.edu or Mike Evans (GA) at mevans@agr.state.ga.us.

❈ **Changes in Bravo Weather Stik 24C labels.** Due to a review of chlorothalonil by EPA, the state 24C labels will no longer allow an extra application of Bravo after shuck split. Georgia was in the process of obtaining a 24C label for this extra application, but this is now nullified. South Carolina and other states will now loose this option.

❈ **Guardian rootstock is acceptable for South Georgia and other lower southeastern sandy soils.** Andy Nyczepir, a USDA nematologist, has recently indicated that the Guardian rootstock should be a good selection for resistance to both root-knot and ring nematodes. The root-knot nematode does not reproduce well on Guardian rootstock. However, he particularly recommends Telone in combination with Guardian rootstock for south GA plantings.

Horticulture Updates

The Influence of Sulfur on Fruit Color and Maturity

Guido Schnabel and Desmond Layne
Clemson University

Introduction

Fungicide applications are necessary in modern peach production systems to protect the fruit from diseases. The most fungicide sprays are applied to control peach scab, a disease caused by *Cladosporium carpophilum*. The fungus begins producing conidia about two weeks before shuck split (SS) and continues to do so until 4 to 5 weeks after SS (scab season). Protection of the fruit tissue with fungicides is critical during this period. Several fungicides are registered for scab control, including Bravo, Abound, Captan, and Sulfur. The compounds differ in their efficacy against scab and market price. It is the grower's choice which product to use. He could prefer to primarily use the cheaper but less effective Sulfur and risk some scab development in a high scab pressure season or the more expensive products with higher efficacy such as Bravo or Abound. What is the best choice? Scab pressure decreases approximately four to five weeks after shuck split, and most growers know that the early scab sprays are the most important ones. Growers usually do not hesitate to use Bravo or Abound during the critical time, but they generally follow with less expensive Sulfur in the cover sprays. This program is generally effective against scab if disease pressure is not too high and it is relatively inexpensive. In this study the impact of 11 and 6 Sulfur sprays starting at PF applied in 7-day and 14 day intervals, respectively, on scab infection and fruit color and maturity of Contender and Cresthaven peach cultivars was determined. The Sulfur sprays intentionally exceeded the scab season by three weeks. In a third treatment, 6 Sulfur sprays were applied concentrating on the scab season starting at PF and ending 6 weeks after SS.

Materials and Methods

Spray trials were performed at the Musser Fruit Research Farm in 2001 on 6-year old Contender and Cresthaven peaches. Depending upon treatment, fungicides were applied at 50% petal fall (PF), at 80% shuck split (SS), and at 80% shuck fall (SF). Cover sprays were applied either in 7 or 14-day intervals following SS (Table 1).

Table 1. Timing of fungicide sprays.

	Application timing										
	PF	SS	SS	1C	2C	3C	4C	5C	6C	7C	8C
No fungicide control											
Bravo/Captan	B	B		C		C		C			
Sulfur weekly	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M
Sulfur early	M	M	M	M		M		M			
Sulfur biweekly	M		M		M		M		M		M

Contender and Cresthaven peaches were harvested on July 5 and 26, respectively. Fruit color was determined in two ways. First, background color was visually rated using "Clemson color chips" which distinguish varying degrees of green – yellow which is well correlated with maturity. Red skin color was visually rated as the percentage of the surface of the fruit that was red. All fruits were measured for size (diameter) at harvest. Maturity was assessed by puncture pressure (hardness of fruit, psi) and soluble solids concentration of the juice (degrees Brix).

Results and Discussion

Impact of Sulfur applications on Contender fruit. The Contender fruit was harvested at shipping maturity. No difference in fruit color or maturity was observed between peaches from the unsprayed control and the Bravo/Captan treatment. However, fruit of all Sulfur treatments had poorer coloration – both background and red skin color – and they were less mature (harder) when compared to the Bravo/Captan treatment (Table 2). Fruit sprayed with Sulfur 6 times applied at PF, SS, SF, 1C, 3C and 5C (referred to as "Sulfur early") had a greener background color and were harder. Sulfur applied 6 times in 14-day intervals (referred to as "Sulfur biweekly") starting at PF through 8C reduced red color, caused a greener background color and firmer flesh **(Figure 1)**. Sulfur applied 11 times at 7-day intervals (referred to as "Sulfur weekly") starting at PF was the worst treatment in regards to fruit quality. Red skin and background color was reduced and fruit were less mature. In general, early season Sulfur applications had a less detrimental impact than later season Sulfur applications. Sulfur applied biweekly until 4 weeks before harvest impacted fruit color less than the Sulfur weekly treatment.

Impact of Sulfur applications on Cresthaven fruit. Cresthaven fruit was harvested tree ripe. As a result, no differences in Brix reading or background color were observed between the Sulfur treatments and the Bravo/Captan treatment. However, the fruit in all Sulfur treatments were less red than in the Bravo/Captan treatment **(**Figure 1**)**.

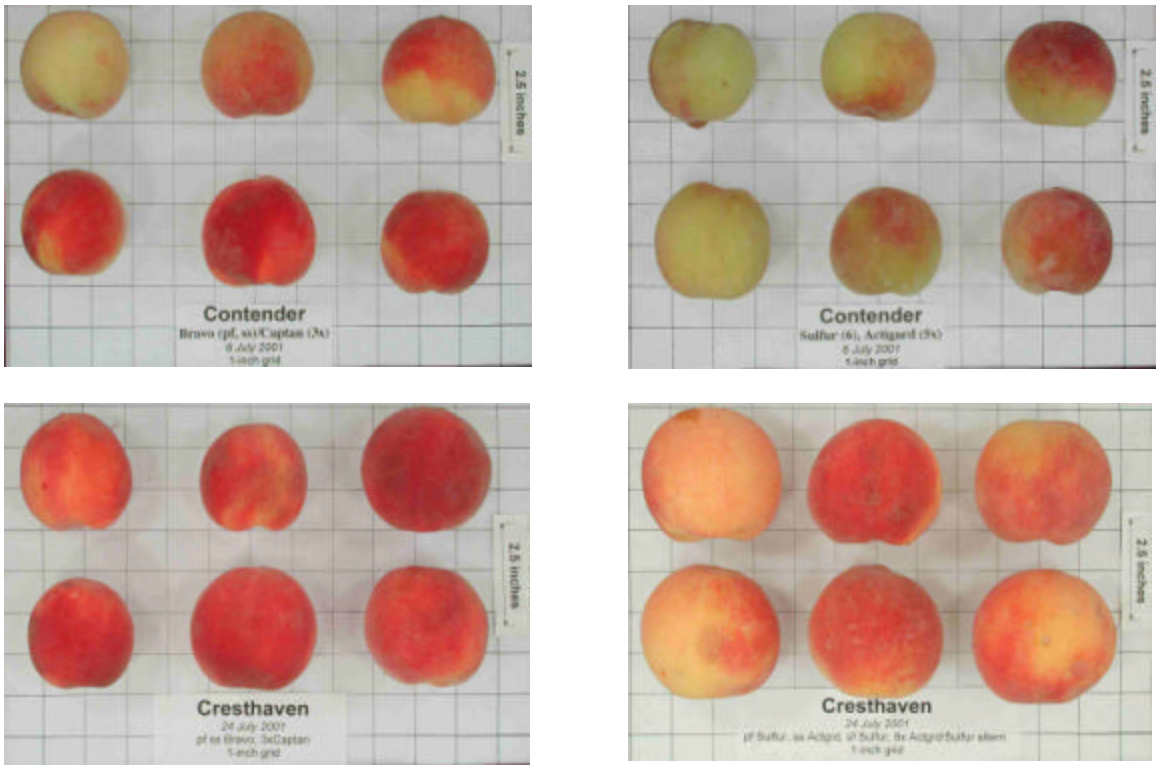
Conclusions

The study indicates that Sulfur can reduce fruit color and delay fruit maturity. If the data described in this article can be repeated in 2002, then growers may want to review their spray strategy and consider to not use Sulfur later in the season.

Table 2. Influence of Sulfur treatments on fruit color and maturity parameters of Contender fruit.

Treatment	Red skin Color	Background Color	Puncture Pressure	Brix reading
no fungicide control	2.23b	4.45a	13.3bc	10.6abc
Bravo/Captan	2.32ab	4.85a	12.9bc	10.8ab
Sulfur early	2.16bc	3.25b	15.1ab	10.6abc
Sulfur biweekly	1.44d	2.17c	16.4a	10.4bc
Sulfur weekly	1.98c	2.85b	17.2a	10.3c

Figure 1. Influence of 6 Sulfur sprays applied in 14-day intervals starting at PF on fruit color of Contender and Cresthaven peaches



Comparison of Meister Programmed Release Fertilizer Versus the Standard Protocol for First and Second Year Non-bearing Trees

Kathy Taylor
University of Georgia

Studies were conducted in 1999, 2000 and 2001 to determine the effect of a single programmed release fertilizer formulation (Meister Chemical Co.) when compared to the use of the standard fertilizer protocol recommended in the Georgia Peach Guide (Horton et al., 1998). The slow release fertilizer has a coating designed to release the formulation at a rate shown in Figure 2. The standard protocol recommends the application of 16 oz 10-10-10 per tree in March following planting, with additional side-dressings with 8 oz each of ammonium nitrate in May and July of the same year.

In 1999, fertilizer applications were made as recommended for the standard protocol and a single application of 12 oz of the programmed release formulation was made in March when the initial 10-10-10 application was made for the standard treatment. All applications were made in a circle at the drip line around the base of the trees. The trees were first leaf 'Redglobe' on Lovell or Guardian™ rootstocks. The experimental design was randomized complete block.

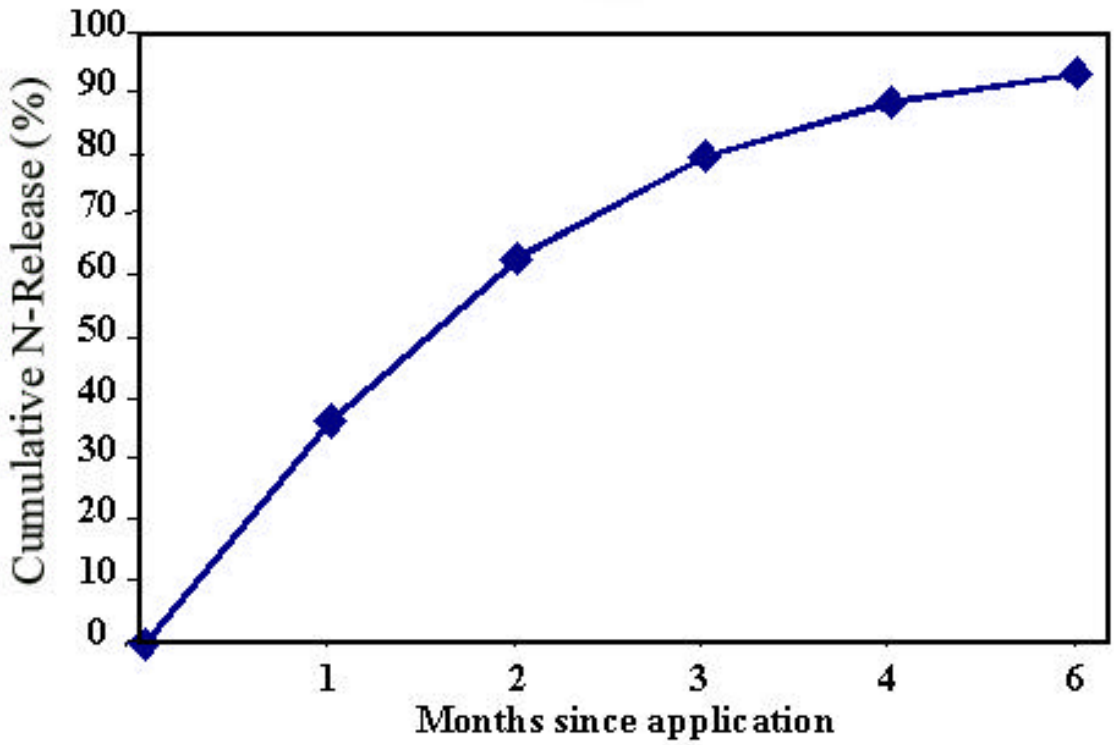


Figure 2. Typical nitrogen release curve from programmed release formulation.

In 2000, fertilizer applications were made as recommended for the standard protocol and a single application of 18 oz of the programmed release formulation was made in March when the initial 10-10-10 application was made for the standard treatment. All applications were made in a circle at the drip line around the base of the trees. The trees were second leaf 'Redglobe' on Lovell or Guardian™ rootstocks. The experimental design was randomized complete block.

In 2001, fertilizer applications were made as recommended for the standard protocol and a single application of 16 oz of the programmed release formulation was made in March when the initial 10-10-10 application was made for the standard treatment. All applications were made in a circle at the drip line around the base of the trees. The trees were first leaf 'RedTop' on 13 different rootstocks. The experimental design was randomized complete block.

RESULTS

Table 3. Foliar nitrogen content and trunk caliper data for 1 and 2 year-old non-bearing trees.

Treatment	Foliar N Content (%)	Caliper (mm)	Caliper Increase (mm)
1999			
Standard Protocol	3.49	33.23	
Meister Formulation	3.49	34.89	
2000			
Standard Protocol	3.84	55.98	22.75
Meister Formulation	3.53	56.18	21.29
2001			
Standard Protocol	3.56	28.18	13.42
Meister Formulation	3.73	29.77	14.67

In all years of the study, the programmed release formulation of slow release fertilizer gave results similar to the standard protocol for one-year-old peach trees. In both cases, foliar nitrogen levels were 3.5 % or higher (Table 3.). This is at the upper end of the sufficiency level recommended for peach trees. Growth was similar for both fertilizer protocols. There were no differences among rootstocks in their response to the fertilizer treatments in either orchard used in this investigation.

A cost analysis after timing orchard workers during routine fertilization protocol suggests that this product will cost the grower a similar amount over the two year period of young tree care and hand fertilization (Table 4). This equivalence in cost for the standard protocol and the new material occurs because the programmed release material requires one trip to the field each year for application to non-bearing trees, versus three trips to the field each year for the standard protocol for non-bearing trees.

Table 4. Cost per acre comparison for materials and application of standard versus new programmed release fertilizer.

	Standard		Programmed Release	
	Material	Labor	Material	Labor
First Year	$19.89	$55.32	$55.59	$18.44
Second Year	$34.34	$55.32	$74.39	$18.44
Total Costs	$164.87		$166.86	

Herbicide Tank Mix Options

Wayne Mitchem
North Carolina State

Tank mixing herbicides has long been practiced to expand weed control spectrum. Tank mixing also aids in herbicide resistance management. The chart below contains a list of suggested herbicide combinations. A burn down herbicide (glyphosate or paraquat) will be needed with preemergence herbicide tank mixes to control emerged weeds.

Herbicide	**Application Time**	**Comments**
Karmex or diuron + Solicam	Spring	Combination provides broad spectrum residual control and suppresses bermudagrass, johnsongrass, yellow and purple nutsedge. Trees must be established 3 years. This combination is a good alternative to Karmex + Sinbar.
Karmex or diuron + Sinbar	Spring	Conbination provides excellent broad spectrum residual control. In addition to suppression yellow and purple nutsedge, Karmex + Sinbar provides good residual control of morningglory species. Trees must be established 2 years.
Princep or simazine + Surflan	Spring	The addition of Surflan to simazine improves residual control of annual grasses, like crabgrass, and some small seeded broadleaf weeds like spotted spurge. Trees must be established for 1 year.
Princep or simazine + Solicam	Spring	The addition of Solicam to simazine improves residual control of annual grasses. Additionally, Solicam suppresses bermudagrass, johnsongrass, yellow and purple nutsedge. Trees must be established 1 year.
Princep + Prowl	Spring	This is a good combination for orchards established 1 year. Prowl improves residual grass control. It is a less expensive alternative to Surflan. However this combination is **NOT** registered for use in bearing orchards. It can be used in 2nd leaf orchards where fruit is not to be harvested for broad spectrum residual control.
Glyphosate + 2,4-D	Dormant	Cutleaf eveningprimrose is a commonly found weed in the Southeast. It is not controlled by glyphosate, however 2,4-D is very effective. This is an excellent combination in orchards where cutleaf eveningprimrose and annual ryegrass are present.

Plant Pathology Updates

Overview of Peach Scab and Control Options

Phillip M. Brannen,
University of Georgia

Scab, caused by the fungus *Cladosporium carpophilum*, is one of the more readily controlled diseases of peach, yet we still have control problems with this disease from time to time. Losses result mainly from lower grading or culling of fruit which is less desirable in the marketplace. However, scab lesions can result in cracking which can lead to introduction of rot organisms, such as brown rot.

Symptoms. Growers are generally aware of the symptoms of scab on twigs (Figure 3) and fruit (Figures 4 and 5). Twig lesions are observed on both the previous season's growth and the new, current-year growth. Current-season infections take place as soon as new, tender, green tissue is available, but symptoms do not appear for four to six weeks. Early symptoms are minute, reddish-gray, diffuse lesions. Eventually, lesions enlarge to form reddish-brown, irregularly-circular to oval lesions which measure approximately ? X ¼ inches. The lesions tend to elongate along the stem, and as they mature, they develop a slightly raised border. Old lesions are tan to light gray, turning black in their centers as they mature; older lesions are also usually oval, but irregular shaped lesions result when two or more coalesce. Mature lesion borders are dark brown to purple. Sporulation does not generally occur on the first year's growth, but it occurs on olivacious tufts of conidia formed on conidiospores during the following season. Examination of second-year lesions in late spring will show a black, rough surface – evidence of spore production. Since scab infections can occur throughout the growing season, lesions in all stages of development can be observed. Many lesions will not be apparent in the first year, but they will fully develop in the following year.

Scab can attack both leaf petioles and blades as well. Petiole symptoms are similar to those described for stems. Leaves are infected on the lower surface, resulting in ill-defined lesions which are angular to circular. The lesions turn olive green during sporulation. Mature lesions are approximately ? inch in diameter, but they can coalesce to form larger, chlorotic (light green) or necrotic (black or brown dead tissues) spots.

Fruit symptoms first appear when the fruit is in mid development. Minute, greenish-gray to olive-colored, circular spots are formed, with more pronounced or numerous infections on the stem end of the fruit. Spots expand to roughly ? inch in size, and depending on pigmentation changes in some varieties, a yellow halo may form around the spot. As mentioned, with severe infection, lesions may crack, resulting in increased rots.

Disease Cycle. The fungus overwinters as chlamydospores, a very hardy survival structure, and mycelium. Prior-year twig lesions begin producing spores (conidia) in late winter and early spring (Figure 6). Spore production varies as the season progresses, but there is always a main peak, which varies in timing from petal fall to shuck split on average. As indicated in Fgure 7, the peak can occur later in the season as well. A

smaller, secondary peak may occur approximately one month after the first peak. Dr. Harold Scherm (UGA) has shown that high spore numbers can definitely be present as early as petal fall. The environment, moisture and temperature, are important in determining spore production – not the host phenology or developmental stage. Spores do not become abundant till the average daily temperature reaches approximately 61ºF, and this coincidentally coincides with petal fall in most southeastern states. Spores remain abundant through mid- to late May; though spore numbers decline at this point, spores are still available for infection throughout the growing season. Though spores can be produced on current-season lesions, the numbers are very low. The exact relationships between the environment and spore production have not been determined, but Dr. Scherm is currently working on these relationships.

There is some confusion in the literature as to when fruit infection occurs, and this needs to be further defined. However, it is relatively clear that infection does not occur prior to shuck split. Keitt (1917) and Petersen and Dunegan (1955) indicated that infection did not occur until four to six weeks after petal fall. In reference to scab, the current Compendium of Stone Fruit Diseases (1995), states "fruit infection seldom occurs in nature until 30 days after petal fall, even though fruit are susceptible much earlier. Before this time, young peach fruit have abundant hairs that discourage fungal penetration . . . Nectarines, lacking pubescence, presumably are susceptible to invasion earlier, but experimental evidence is lacking." Such statements have added to the confusion associated with this pathogen. **Though additional research is needed, it would be dangerous for producers to assume that infection does not occur as soon as susceptible tissue is available (i.e. shuck split). Peach fruit can be infected shortly after shuck split; indeed, fruit have been successfully infected as early as ten days after shuck split. The current consensus of evidence from spray trials indicates that early sprays (petal fall and shuck split) are very important for control of scab!**

The incubation period (time from infection till symptom expression) for scab is 25-45 days on twigs and 42-77 days on fruit. Leaf symptoms appear in 25-45 days. Spores produced on new fruit and twig lesions can produce secondary infections, but once again, the numbers of spores produced in this manner are considered to be of minor importance to the overall scab epidemic.

Spores are dispersed through splashing rain and wind, with wind being the primary means of dispersal between trees. Within trees, rainwater and dew runoff act to move spores. Spore germination is greatly reduced when free water is not present. During the six weeks which follow shuck split, rainfall greatly favors infection. However, heavy dews are also acceptable for spore germination and subsequent infection. The optimum temperature for spore germination is 72-87ºF. **Therefore, relatively warm, wet weather following shuck split provides an ideal environment for scab development.**

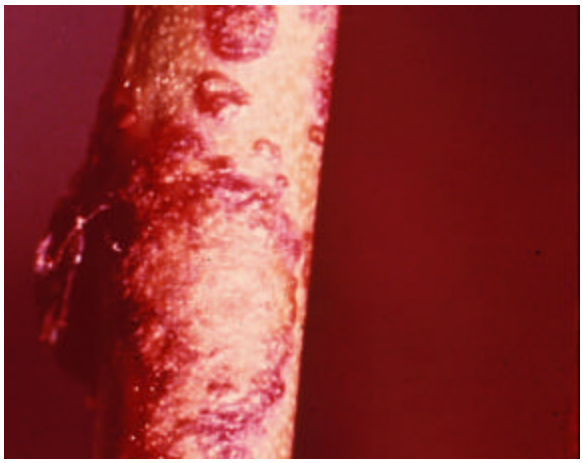


Figure 3. Scab stem lesions. Note the oval to irregular lesion shape with a raised margin (photo courtesy of Paul Bertrand; University of Georgia).

Figure 5. Scab lesions on mature fruit. Note the yellow halo around each spot.

Figure 4. Scab lesions on green fruit. Note that lesions are more concentrated near the stem end of the peach (photo courtesy of Paul Bertrand; University of Georgia).

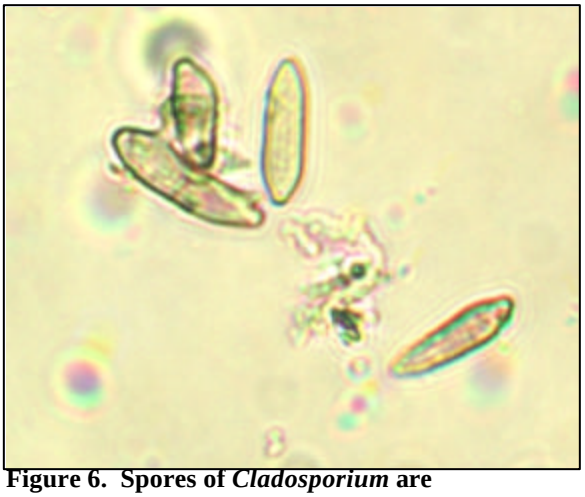


Figure 6. Spores of *Cladosporium* are somewhat irregular (variable in shape and size), and they can easily be confused for other fungal spores. Produced on peach stem lesions in prolific numbers, spore production peaks around petal fall through shuck split.

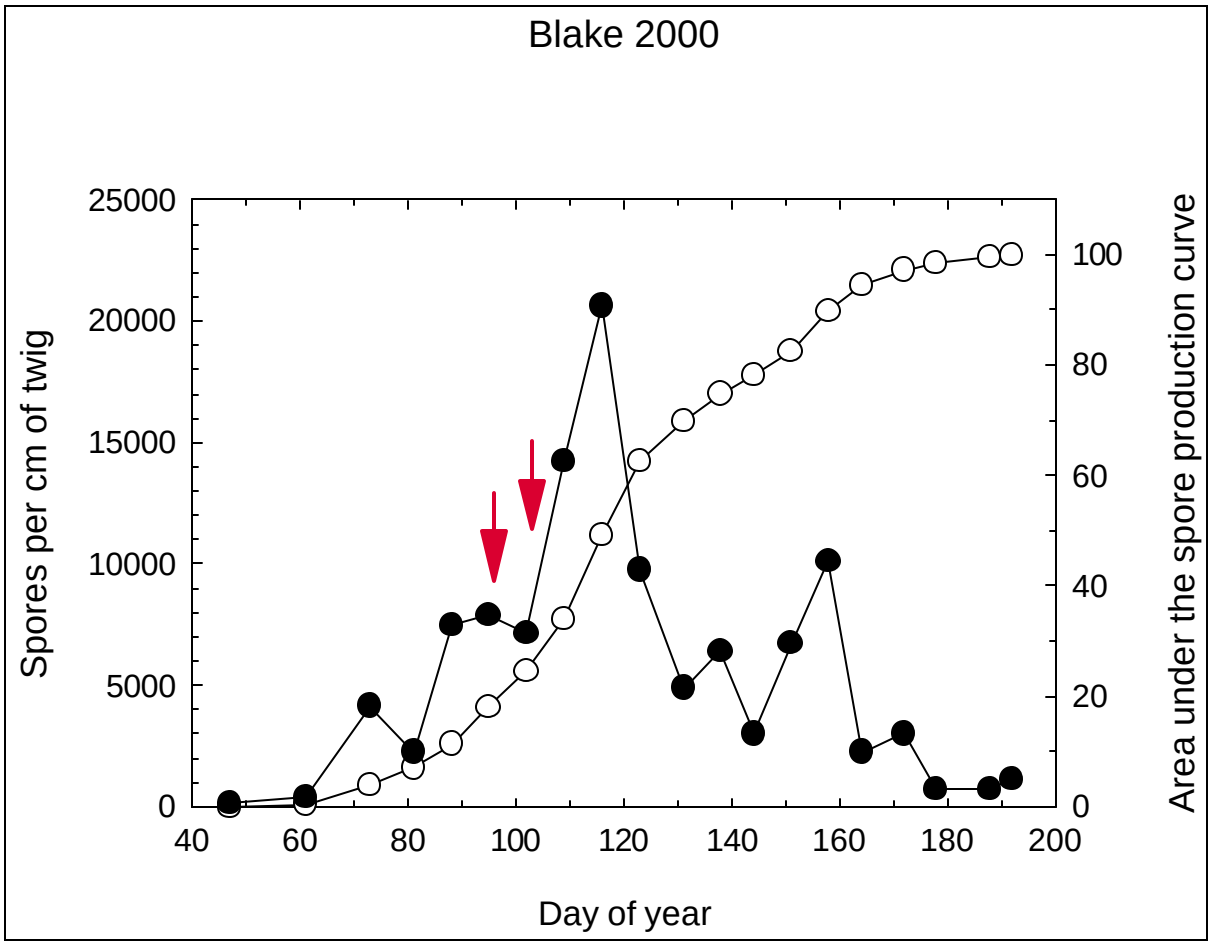


Figure 7. Seasonal production of spores by *Cladosporium carpophilum* on peach (Blake variety; UGA Horticulture Farm; 2000). Spore counts (spores per cm of twig) at any given date are shown with closed circles, while cumulative spore counts (area under the spore curve) are shown with open circles. Though spore production varies throughout the season, two substantial peaks occur in this example, one at approximately 112 days and another at approximately 158 days. In this example, the main peak in production occurs after petal fall (left arrow) and shuck split (right arrow), but this is not the norm. Generally, this peak coincides with the petal fall to shuck split period. It is not currently known whether the secondary peak occurs in well-sprayed orchards. This test site was unsprayed for the previous year, which may have resulted in two main infection sources – lesions formed from twigs which were infected early in the previous year and lesions formed from twigs which were infected late in the previous year. The second peak may not be observed in well sprayed orchards, since the late twig infections would have been limited. This will be a topic for additional research (used with permission of Harold Scherm; University of Georgia).

Control Measures. With the information presented above, designing scab control measures is relatively straightforward. The consensus of evidence indicates that early petal fall or shuck split applications are important, either in reduction of spore numbers (petal fall and shuck split) or direct protection of susceptible tissues (shuck split and early cover sprays). An antisporulant fungicide application at petal fall and shuck split should be helpful in reduction of spore numbers, thereby reducing subsequent infections of the stems and fruit. Chlorothalonil (Bravo Weather Stik™ and other formulations) is labeled for use through shuck split, and it is an excellent scab material; it also has a long residual relative to other fungicides, so it would be a excellent choice for the shuck split spray. In scab trials, Abound™ has been shown to reduce spore numbers, and in Clemson University trials, it has given control which is equivalent to Bravo (see last issue). It can be used after shuck split, so it does not have this limitation.

Captan materials, sulfur materials, and Abound are recommended for cover sprays. Of these, Abound and Captan will likely be more efficacious than sulfur, but both are substantially more expensive than sulfur. Therefore producers like using sulfur. Since good scab control is critical through six weeks after shuck split, consider using Captan and/or Abound for sprays during this period. Studies from Auburn University have shown that Captan consistently provides better scab control than sulfur.

Alternate-row-middle (ARM) applications, direct application of spray to every other row middle on an alternating basis, are only recommended from the fourth cover spray till the first preharvest spray. Since scab spore numbers are greatly reduced later in the season, and owing to the long incubation period for the fungus (late-season infections do not result in fruit symptoms), ARM is acceptable for scab control. This would be a good time to use sulfur as well. However, ARM should only be utilized in a well-managed orchard where scab pressure is low. In addition, if 30 hours of continuous wetness occurs, shift from sulfur-based to captan-based cover sprays. This will give better scab control, but it mainly provides for better control of green fruit rot, the mid-season phase of brown rot. If wet conditions continue, consider reducing spray intervals (as the labels allow), increasing fungicide rates, and switching to complete spraying (as opposed to ARM).

No system is full-proof, but good scab control requires a very strong application program in the early season. Though we can reduce the intensity of management for scab in the mid to late season, weather plays a role, and we have to keep this in mind when selecting fungicidal options during this timeframe. If the correct fungicides are utilized at the correct time and in the correct manner, scab infections should be minimal on southeastern peaches.

Selected References

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Selected Peach Web Sites and Related Internet information

February 2002

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US EPA Office of Pesticide Programs (OPP)

http://www.epa.gov/pesticides

Pesticide Reregistration Status (REDs, IREDs) - REDs & Pesticide Registration Factsheets

http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/reregistration/status.htm

Azinphos-methyl Factsheet

http://www.epa.gov/oppsrrd1REDs/factsheets/azm_fs.htm

Phosmet Factsheet

http://www.epa.gov/oppsrrd1/REDs/factseets/phsmet_fs.htm

Chlorpyrifos

http://www.epa.gov/oppsrrd1/REDs/chlorpyrifos_ired.pdf

Organophosphate Pesticides: Status Summary of the Organophosphate Review

http:://www.epa.gov/pesticides/op/status.htm

Preliminary OP Cumulative Risk Assessment Organophosphate Pesticides

[Comment > 8 Mar 02]

http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/cumulative/pra-op/

Cumulative Risk Assessment Timeline

http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/cumulative/cumtime.pdf

OP Schedule & Milestones

http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/cumulative/schedule_&_milestones.htm

EPA Registration Division Workplan for 2002

http://www.epa.gov/opprd001/workplan/

EPA Pesticide Environmental Stewardship Program

http://www.epa.gov/oppbppd1/PESP/

Clemson University Pesticide Information Program

http://entweb.clemson.edu/pesticid

"Eastern Peach Pest Management Strategies for Adapting to Changing Management Options" -

http://pestdata.ncsu.edu/pmsp/pdf/easternpeach.pdf

Dr. Des Layne's Peach Web Site

http://virtual.clemson.edu/groups/hort/peach/peachhome.htm

The South Carolina Peach Council

http://www.scda.state.sc.us/scpeachc.html

The Georgia Peach

http://www.griffin.peachnet.edu/caes/gapeach/

The Georgia Peach Council

http://www.griffin.peachnet.edu/caes/gapeach/peach_council.html

Southeast Regional Peach Newsletter

http://resources.caes.uga.edu/publications/newsletters/SRPN/

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Published quarterly. The Southeastern Regional Peach Newsletter is available through the following website http://resources.caes.uga.edu/publications/newsletters/SRPN/. If a hardcopy is desired, please contact your local county agent.

PUTTING KNOWLEDGE TO WORK

The University of Georgia and Ft. Valley State College, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and counties of the state cooperating. The Cooperative Extension Service offers educational programs, assistance and materials to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex or disability. An equal opportunity/affirmative action organization committed to a diverse work force.