

ORGANIC APRICOT, NECTARINE, AND PEACH SCHEDULE

Apricots, nectarines, and peaches are not the easiest fruit to grow in our area, but it can be done. When choosing and planting trees, follow the guidelines in *Your Organic Orchard*. Also,

- Check the tags for cultivars that are resistant to *peach leaf curl*, our most prevalent problem with peaches and nectarines.
- Sheltering the trees from rain in the late winter/early spring can reduce *peach leaf curl* infection. This can be done by keeping the tree in a movable container, building a small cover for the tree, or planting the tree in a sheltered spot (like under an eave).
- These fruits need long, hot summers to ripen; plant where they will get good sun and heat.
- Avoid planting (or monitor) closely related ornamentals like English laurel, flowering plums, and flowering cherries, which can harbor pests and diseases.
- Apricots bloom early enough that late frosts can damage the blooms, so choose your location wisely!

In our area peach leaf curl is the main problem of peaches and nectarines, especially while the trees are young. These trees also see *brown rot/blossom rot*, *aphids*, *powdery mildew*, and *shothole fungus/coryneum blight*. Always identify pests and diseases before spraying.

TIMING	CARE AND MONITORING
<p>Dormant after leaf drop through mid-winter</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If <i>shothole fungus</i> was a problem, spray copper* or Serenade after leaf fall. • Apply lime to the soil within the dripline of the tree, and then mulch to contain fungal spores. (<i>peach leaf curl</i>, <i>shothole fungus</i>, <i>blossom blight</i>) • While applying mulch, check around the soil line of the trunk (and slightly below ground) for <i>peach tree borer</i> holes. Kill the larvae inside with a wire or knife point. • If the trunk gets direct southern or western sun, paint it white to prevent <i>winter damage</i> to the bark. (<i>bacterial canker</i>, <i>peachtree borer</i>)
<p>Delayed Dormant March -April</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Release mason bees, provide clean housing. • As leaves start to open, fertilize young trees for structural growth according to instructions on container. Overfertilizing can invite problems. • If <i>peach tree borer</i> has been a problem, beneficial nematodes applied to the bark at the base of the trunk and the soil immediately adjacent can help. • Re-apply mulch after fertilizing to contain spores. (<i>peach leaf curl</i>, <i>shothole fungus</i>, <i>blossom rot</i>) • If <i>peach leaf curl</i> is pervasive discourage or reduce fruiting this year, fertilize, and water well. • Watch young trees (especially their first 2 years) for signs of <i>bacterial canker</i>, note which stems to prune out when there is dry weather. As with other stone fruit, avoid bark damage when the weather is wet. • Plant seeds and starts of beneficial insect attracting plants. • Put crumpled/rolled paper in branch crotches to encourage earwigs, which prey on <i>aphids</i> and other small insect pests.

TIMING	CARE AND MONITORING
Pink stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If <i>brown rot/blossom rot</i> has been a problem, you can spray with copper*. • Keep an eye on the weather: a <i>late frost</i> can damage the blossoms and ruin your crop. If a late frost is expected and your tree is small enough, a frost blanket over the tree overnight may make the difference.
Pink through petal fall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch for signs of <i>blossom rot</i> (flowers die and remain hanging on branch) prune/pinch them out as they occur. • Caterpillars like <i>codling moth</i> larvae, <i>cutworms</i>, <i>leafrollers</i> can be treated with Bt. If <i>leafrollers</i> are not too pervasive or it's a small tree, picking out the affected leaves may be easier.
Summer (July-Aug.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thin fruit for larger, more flavorful production. Watch for fruit infected with <i>brown rot</i>; remove and destroy. • <i>Aphids</i> can be treated with a directed blast of water, or spray insecticidal soap. • Enjoy your harvested fruit!
Post-harvest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rake and remove any leaves or fallen fruit promptly (<i>peach leaf curl</i>, <i>shothole fungus</i>, <i>bacterial canker</i>, etc.). • Remove any old fruit that hangs on the tree. <i>Brown rot</i> overwinters in mummified old fruit! • On a dry day prune for structure, air circulation, access, and production. These trees bear on new wood, so you may want to remove up to 2/3 of old fruiting wood. Prune out any dead or infected wood. (<i>powdery mildew</i>, <i>scab</i>, <i>brown rot</i>, <i>blossom rot</i>) • If <i>peach tree borer</i> has been a problem, beneficial nematodes applied to the bark at the base of the trunk and the soil immediately adjacent can help. • If <i>peach leaf curl</i> was an issue, spray with sulfur[†] or copper* after 90% of leaves have fallen (do this after pruning to save some spraying). Repeat twice afterwards as weather permits, ideally at two week intervals.

Note: For nectarines and peaches alternate between applications of sulfur and copper sprays. For apricots **do not** use sulfur. Do not mix copper and sulfur or use the same tank for both products.

* Build up of copper spray can harm earthworms or aquatic animals.

† Do not spray sulfur if temperatures may exceed 85° F.

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