

Growing Fruit Trees: Prunes/ Plums

Proper Care of Trees for Noxious Pest Avoidance

Important Notice:

Before planting fruit trees, it is the residential growers responsibility to familiarize oneself with the RDOS [Bylaw](#). It is necessary that proper care of fruit trees is taken to prevent & control pest infestations.

Before Planting your Tree

Prune/ plum trees can only produce healthy fruit if home growers pay careful attention to pruning, sanitation, pest management, & harvest practices. If you are planting the tree for shade or ornamental purposes, consider planting an ornamental tree that will be less bothersome, costly to care for & manage. It should be noted that plum/ prune trees are recommended over other fruit trees as they are typically the least affected by pests & disease.

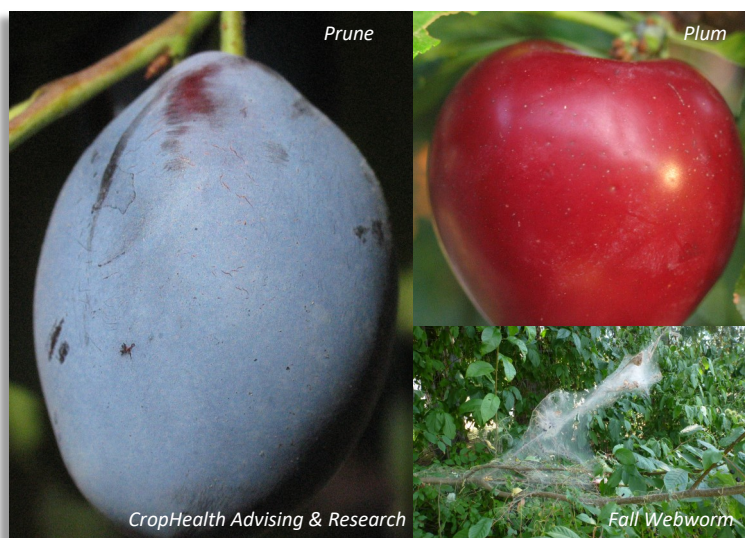
General Prune/ Plum Tree Care

Sanitation: Diligent sanitation practice will reduce the risk for pest infestation. Remove dead & decaying fruit & leaves from the tree & ground. Maintain a good weeding & visual inspection routine to avoid pests.

Pruning: Avoid pruning in fall or winter to avoid winter injury, which makes the tree more susceptible to pests. In early spring (before bud break & at least two weeks after last frost), remove all dead & infested branches first. Prune the upper part of the tree more than the lower to maximize sunlight & airflow.

Thinning: Thin the fruit in June (1-2 inches apart) to improve crop quality & prevent pests, as they prefer to enter fruit where two fruits are in contact.

Harvesting: Remove ALL fruit at harvest (Sept-Nov) & make sure all diseased & insect-infested fruit is destroyed properly. Fruit should be left to mature on tree until almost fully colored. Bears are especially fond of plums due to late ripening and harvest season.



Pest Avoidance & Management

Important: Keeping trees healthy by prioritizing sanitation practice will help reduce pest & disease problems. Avoid chemical intervention (pesticides) & use preventative strategies first.

Tree Netting & Fruit Bagging: Net the entire tree or place horticultural bags around the fruit when small & leave on for the majority of the growth process. This reduces the risk of pests, disease, & damage from birds.

Pesticides (last resort): If preventative measures are no longer adequate, consult professionals before use. Always begin with the least toxic product available first.

Pesticide Stewardship: Do not apply in daytime when bees are foraging, when wind speeds are high, or when rain is forecast.

MOST COMMON PLUM/ PRUNE TREE PESTS

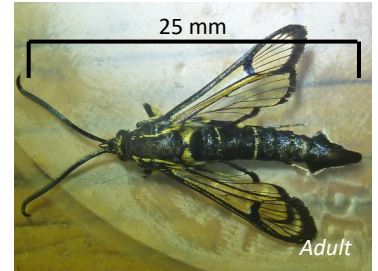
Leaf Curl Plum Aphid

(25mm = 1 inch)

Peach Tree Borer



Eugene E. Nelson, Bugwood.org



CropHealth Advising & Research



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Identification: Found on leaves, twigs, or roots in colonies. Curling leaves & slow growth of shoots & fruitlets may be seen. Adults are pale green to light yellow in color. Sooty mold may be seen with honeydew deposits.

Management: Check leaves before bud burst. Avoid excessive nitrogen application. Apply sticky banding around trunk to keep away ants that protect the aphids from natural predators.

Identification: Gumming can be seen at the base of tree, & young girdled trees may die. Older trees may weaken & become more susceptible to other pests. Larvae are cream-colored, & adults are clear-wing moths.

Management: Remove borers by cutting into their tunnels with a sharp knife or by probing with a wire. When borers are removed, apply metal trunk-collars at base of tree.

Fall Webworm & Tent Caterpillar



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Identification: Tent caterpillars are seen in May-June, whereas fall webworms are seen in July-September. Both pests skeletonize, consume leaves & reside in large nests of webbing (containing excrement & leaf fragments).

Management: Frequently monitor for eggs, webs, & larvae. Remove nests by hand & place in bucket of soapy water.

Additional Info

Other Pests to Look out for

Shothole Borer, Ambrosia Beetle, Rust Mites, San Jose Scale, European Red Mite, Plum Curculio, Eyespotted Bud Moth, Green Fruitworms, Brown Marmorated Stink Bug etc.

More Detailed Pest Descriptions Found Here:

[Home & Garden Pest Management Guide for BC Pests of Fruit Trees.](#)

Okanagan Invasive Species Online

This is a useful resource for information on all invasive insect pests of concern in the region. This can be found at: www.OISO.ca



Plant Me Instead Factsheet

For ornamental & native tree or shrub alternatives for fruit bearing trees & shrubs, visit [Tree Fruit Pest Control | RDOS](#)

Brown Marmorated Stink Bug Note

This is a very destructive pest that affects a wide range of fruits & vegetables. Send images or samples of the suspected stink bug to the BC Ministry of Agriculture or report [online](#).

Contact your local nursery/ greenhouse if you are unsure about what management strategy should be practiced & how to properly care for your fruit tree.

Noxious Pest Program Video Media:

[Regional District Okanagan Similkameen \(RDOS\) - YouTube](#)