



By Brian Sams

E-mail: briansams@live.com.au
www.wattletreehorticulture.com.au

Brown rot on stone fruits in the home garden Fact Sheet

Backyard growers of peaches and apricots especially will know about brown rot. It's a fungal disease that looks like it sounds. A soft brown rot on fruit skins that slowly works its way into the fruit. Like most fungal diseases, it thrives in humid weather. Long, warm wet spells perfectly suit the development of the fungus, and it's not uncommon for an entire crop to be infected. Our Queensland summers are very much conducive to brown rot.



To control this disease is easier said than done.
However there are a strategies that may help.

- be vigilant about cleaning up any mummified fruit
- in winter spray all stone fruit trees with organic approved lime Sulphur and then follow up with a second spray one month later
- prune trees to let light and air into the canopy
- remove any dead twigs or branches
- to really provide the best chance of clean fruit you could also spray a third time, just as the flower buds are about to burst, with organic approved copper hydroxide.



A little more about the disease from the DPI...

The disease is carried over from season to season on mummified fruits (see image below), peduncles (old fruit stalks), cankers and infected wood left on the tree. Fruit and wood which fall and remain on the ground are also significant sources of infection. Blossom blight occurs to a greater or lesser extent in most years, and infected blossoms continue to produce spores up to and throughout the harvest period. Injuries caused by insect pests, hail or fruit splitting allow the establishment of infections and subsequent formation of spores. Fruits which fall to the ground in the pre-harvest period and during harvest are readily infected with brown rot and are of major importance in the starting of severe outbreaks.

