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Arkansas Plant Health Clinic Newsletter

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Plum

Homeowners are sometimes startled to find abnormal growths instead of fruit on their plum trees. Plum pockets, or Bladder pockets, or Mock plums are the common names given to a fungal disease of plums caused by *Taphrina communis*. Leaves, stems, and fruit may be affected. However, the most obvious symptoms are on the fruit. Symptoms appear about 6-8 weeks after bud break with small blisters forming on the surface of the fruit. The fruit become thickened and distorted, growing to as much as ten times their normal size. The centers of infected fruits do not contain pits and are spongy or hollow. The deformed fruit may have a reddish or grayish appearance at first, but eventually turns brown or black and falls prematurely from the tree. Infected leaves and shoots have symptoms like Peach leaf curl symptoms, although generally the leaf symptoms are not as noticeable on plum as they are on peach and nectarine. There are cultivars with resistance to Plum pockets. Rake up all damaged fruit and all fallen leaves. Apply chlorothalonil, or liquid lime-sulfur in the fall after leaf fall.

Plum Pockets-*Taphrina communis*



Photo by Sherrie Smith, University of Arkansas
Cooperative Extension

Plum Pockets-*Taphrina communis*



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Plum Pockets-*Taphrina communis*



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Turf

Ground pearls, *Margarodes* spp., are a type of scale insect found in the soil that feed on the roots of turf. Like other scale insects, they are sap feeders. They prefer centipedegrass, but are also found on bahiagrass, carpetgrass, St. Augustine, Zoysia, and Bermuda. They are often associated with low pH soils. Symptoms are circular to irregular areas of sickly looking, thin turf. The grass yellows, then turns brown and dies, especially in hot, dry weather. Adult females have pinkish sac-like bodies, about 1.6mm long, with well-developed front legs and shorter second and third legs. Males are tiny white to pinkish gnat-like insects. Mature females emerge from their overwintering cysts in late spring, and crawl to the soil surface where

they mate with the tiny, winged males (they can also reproduce without mating). Once they have mated, the females dig back into the soil where they lay a cluster of 20 to 100 eggs in a mass of waxy strands. The eggs hatch into crawlers. The crawlers attach themselves to grass roots and begin to cover themselves with a protective coat of yellowish to light purple wax, giving them their characteristic pearl shape. This waxy coating, unfortunately, makes them impervious to most insecticide applications. Applications twice a year of a mixture of imidacloprid, fine horticultural oil, and wetting agent have been only moderately effective. Removal of the soil and existing turf is only successful when at least a foot of the soil is removed, which is impractical for most homeowners. Healthy turf can tolerate some levels of infestation. Damage can be minimized by proper pH, fertilization, mowing height, and watering during dry periods.

Ground Pearls-*Margarodes* spp.



Photo by Sherrie Smith, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension

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Ground Pearls-*Margarodes* spp.



Photo by Sherrie Smith, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension

Muscadine Angular Leaf

Mycosphaerella angulata



Photo by Sherrie Smith, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension

Muscadine

Angular leaf spot of Muscadine grapes, caused by *Mycosphaerella angulata*, is an important disease in the southeastern United States, including Arkansas. The disease can cause extensive defoliation and yield loss. Symptoms begin as light-yellow flecks or spots. The centers of older lesions become dark brown to black, and angular in shape. Protective fungicides should be applied starting after bloom and continuing at 14-day intervals until August. Captan, Abound, Sovran, Flint, and, Pristine are labeled and may be used. Follow label.

Apple

Apple scab, caused by *Venturia inaequalis*, is the most economically important disease of apples in the United States. Severe crop losses may occur in areas with wet, cool springs. Scab lesions may occur on fruit, leaves, blossoms, petioles, and peduncles, with the most obvious symptoms on the leaves and fruit. Lesions are often found first on lower leaves, and as leaves unfurl both sides may become infected. The spots are velvety brown to olive green with feathery edges. As the lesions age and become hardened, leaf malformation may occur. Leaves that become completely covered with lesions yellow, shrivel, and fall from the tree prematurely. Infected fruit gets the same



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lesions and can become deformed and cracked. The fruit lesions eventually become dark brown to black circular rough spots. Applications of Fruit tree sprays every 7-10 days should be made from the tight cluster stage until terminal shoot growth ends in midsummer. All fallen leaves and fruit should be cleaned up. Dormant pruning of infected terminals aids in removing primary inoculum but is time consuming and can affect yield.

Apple Scab-*Venturia inaequalis*



Photo by Sherrie Smith, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension

Apple Scab-*Venturia inaequalis*



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This bulletin from the Cooperative Extension Plant Health Clinic (Plant Disease Clinic) is an electronic update about diseases and other problems observed in our lab each month. Input from everybody interested in plants is welcome and appreciated.

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