

Peach (and Nectarine)

(Prunus persica)






Peach trees are prized for their **fragrant spring blooms** and **high-quality fruit**, but in Colorado they are **high-maintenance and highly vulnerable** to **borers, cankers, leaf curl, brown rot, aphids, scale**, and **environmental stress**. Late spring freezes are also a major cause of fruit loss.



Seasonal Pest & Disease Calendar

Icons: 🌸 Spring | ☀️ Summer | 🍂 Fall | ❄️ Winter

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Active Season</u>	<u>Icons</u>
Peach tree borer (major issue)	Insect/borer	Summer	☀️
Lesser peach tree borer	Insect/borer	Summer	☀️
Cytospora canker / bacterial canker	Fungus/Bacteria	Spring–Fall	🌸 ☀️ 🍂
Peach leaf curl	Fungus	Spring (infection at bud swell)	🌸
Brown rot	Fungus	Spring–Fall	🌸 ☀️ 🍂
Aphids	Insect	Spring–Fall	🌸 ☀️ 🍂

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Active Season</u>	<u>Icons</u>
Scale insects	Insect	Spring crawlers; visible all year	 
Environmental stress (heat/drought)	Abiotic	Summer–Fall	 
Late freezes	Weather	Spring	

Pest & Disease Guide (Homeowner-Friendly)

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Common Symptoms</u>	<u>Treatment & Management</u>
Peach Tree Borer (Most Serious Threat)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sawdust-like frass mixed with amber sap at trunk base • Gummosis • Sudden limb decline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep trunk protected—no string trimmers or mower injury • Deep watering & mulch to reduce stress • Professional preventive trunk sprays each summer
Lesser Peach Tree Borer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gummosis higher on trunk/limbs • Exit holes • Branch dieback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as above—stress reduction + preventive sprays
Cytospora / Bacterial Canker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amber gum oozing • Sunken bark lesions • Dead twigs & branches • Infection often after winter injury 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prune in late winter only • Sanitize tools • Remove severely infected limbs • No chemical cure—vigor is the key
Peach Leaf Curl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distorted, thickened, reddened leaves • Leaf drop in spring • Reduced fruit set 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dormant spray required: copper or chlorothalonil before bud swell (pros/homeowner depending on product) • Remove infected leaves

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Common Symptoms</u>	<u>Treatment & Management</u>
Brown Rot (Fruit Rot)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brown, soft fruit • Tan fungal spores • Blossom blight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove mummified fruit • Good pruning for airflow • Preventive fungicide during bloom & pre-harvest (pros)
Aphids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sticky honeydew • Sooty mold • Leaf curling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hose-rinse • Encourage lady beetles • Systemic treatments for severe cases
Scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard bumps on twigs • Yellowing, thinning canopy • Honeydew present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dormant oil in winter • Treat crawler stage in late spring • Prune heavily infested twigs
Environmental Stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaf scorch • Early fruit drop • Sparse canopy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep water every 10–14 days in summer • Mulch 2–4" (not touching trunk) • Avoid reflective heat sites

When to Worry vs. When It's Cosmetic

● When to Worry (action recommended)

- Gummosis with frass at the base (clear **peach tree borer**)
- Large cankers spreading along limbs
- Severe leaf curl with major leaf drop
- Brown rot infecting multiple fruits or blossoms
- Progressive dieback over several seasons
- Repeated late frost damage killing blossoms each year

Peach trees in Colorado **require consistent care** and the right site to thrive.

● **Mostly Cosmetic (monitor only)**

- Small amounts of leaf curl (if treated next winter)
- Minor aphid populations
- Light brown rot on a few fruits (rare in dry summers)
- A few scale insects
- Early yellowing during drought (improves with watering)

Most minor issues improve with **seasonal weather changes and proper irrigation**.

If you'd like, I can continue with **Nectarine (same sheet), Apricot, Mulberry, Apple, Pear**, or build a **Colorado Backyard Orchard Pest & Disease Guide**.