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Two Summer Problems...

Crinkle of Plums and Wind-Suck of Grapes

By the PLANT PATHOLOGY BRANCH

During the summer in Western Australia, high temperatures and drying winds cause fruit abnormalities known commonly as “crinkle” of plums and “wind suck” of grapes.

SYMPTOMS
Surface depressions occur on affected fruits leaving the flesh underneath discoloured, dry and unpalatable. These depressions produce a crinkling effect on any part of the fruit and not just the upper surface exposed to the sun.

CAUSE
“Crinkle” and “wind suck” (which are quite different from sun burn) mainly result from water withdrawal from the fruit to the leaves. This follows excessive moisture evaporation from leaves during hot, dry, windy weather when the roots are unable to make up the moisture loss quickly enough. Root damage by implements or disease tends to aggravate the problem. Furthermore the normal growth processes may be upset by very high temperatures especially following cool weather.

CONTROL
It is not a simple matter to combat problems which are brought about primarily by climatic influences. However, the following points, where practicable, will help to reduce the incidence of these abnormal fruit conditions. They are directed at more effective use of water.

Wind suck of grapes. The berries near the shoulder of the bunch are generally the first to develop symptoms.
(1) In poor soils improve the water retention and penetration by building up the humus content.

(2) Good soakings of water are preferable to frequent light sprinklings.

(3) Reduce water evaporation from the soil by covering the surface with a mulch of lawn cuttings, leaves, or similar material.

(4) If natural shelter from the wind is not available, the provision of wind breaks is desirable.

Heat crinkle of plums. The collapsed areas on these immature Kelsey plums are the result of a sudden heat wave in November. Kelsey is very susceptible to crinkle.
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