Plum Pox

Last Modified:

European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization Archive, Bugwood.org

Plum pox virus (PPV), also called Sharka, is the most devastating viral disease of stone fruit worldwide. It affects *Prunus* spp., including peaches, nectarines, apricots, plums, almonds, cherries, and some ornamental *Prunus* cultivars.

PPV infection weakens trees, severely reducing fruit production and marketability. Aphids and people moving infected nursery stock spread the disease long distances.

The disease was first detected in North America in 1999. Twenty years later, APHIS declared PPV eradicated from the United States.

What To Look For

- Severely deformed fruit
- Rings or spots on fruit skin or leaves
- Brownish depressions and grooves on the surface of fruit
- Premature fruit drop
- Reddish or brownish colored flesh
- Green peach aphids, small sap-sucking insects that carry the disease

It may take several years for symptoms to appear. If you suspect your plants are infected, contact your State department of agriculture or State plant health director. The only way to confirm PPV is to test suspect plant material using a specialized molecular diagnostic test.

How To Prevent This Disease

PPV prevention measures include early detection field surveys and the use of certified nursery stock.

How It Is Treated

There is no cure for PPV. Control measures include using resistant varieties (when available), controlling aphids, eliminating infected trees, and enforcing domestic and international quarantine regulations.

Report Plant Pests and Diseases

Have you seen this pest or signs of pest damage? Immediately report your findings.
Find your State plant regulatory official
Find your State plant health director

Controlling Plum Pox

Expand All

Current Status

The United States has been plum pox-free since 2019, and we're looking to keep it that way. To spearhead prevention efforts, APHIS has implemented a strong safeguarding program, that includes:

- Monitoring for the disease in stone fruit-producing States
- Science-based import regulations to prevent the disease’s reentry via imported trees and propagative material
- Continued cooperation with Canada to help prevent virus incursions

Regulatory Information

View Federal Regulations 7 CFR 301.74

When a quarantine is in place, the United States regulates trees, seedlings, root stock, budwood, branches, twigs, and leaves of host *Prunus* spp. but not seeds or fruit. If a seed-borne strain of PPV emerges, APHIS will revisit the list of PPV regulated articles.

- Regulated Areas (127.51 KB)
- Regulated Articles (157.67 KB)

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