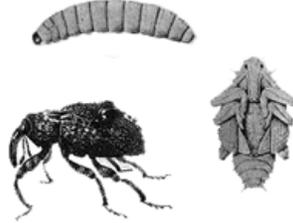


## *Controlling Plum Curculio*



The Plum Curculio (PC) adult is a tiny snout beetle (**1/4” – 1/5” long**) that is a pest of peach, plum, apple, cherry, apricot, pear, quince, wild plum (including Mexican Plum), hawthorn, and native crabapple. The most severe damage is that it causes **“the worm” in the fruit of our peaches and plums**. The worm is the larva of the Plum Curculio – a curved, slightly white to yellowish, legless grub with a brown head. It is about 3/8” long when fully grown.

Control of this pest requires close observation and accurate timing of several different treatments and cultural practices throughout the year. A vibrant, healthy, growing tree can resist infestation better than a malnourished and weak tree. Therefore, maintain the health of the tree by fertilizing, mulching, and watering according to our *Planting & Maintenance Guide for Fruits, Nuts, and Berries*.

**LATE WINTER:** The adult PC emerges from its overwintering site. It begins feeding on leaves and flowers. It begins laying eggs as soon as fruit is formed on the tree – when the fruit is barely visible. At this time, as often as possible, spread sheets on the ground under the tree and shake the tree to knock the PC to the ground. Quickly gather up the sheets and submerge them in soapy water to kill the PC.

This is also the time to prepare for spraying the plum curculio. Choose an effective organic insecticide, such as **Kaolin Clay** or **EcoSmart Insect Killer**. Timing is crucial when spraying for PC! In order to protect the bees, **DO NOT SPRAY DURING FULL BLOOM** or whenever bees are present!

**AT PETAL-FALL:** When 75% of the flower petals have fallen (5 days after full bloom)

**AT SHUCK SPLIT:** The shuck is the papery covering, or calyx, that covers the baby fruit. Shuck split occurs after the fruit has barely formed and the shuck has split open. (14 days after full bloom)

**HOW TO SPRAY KAOLIN CLAY:** Mix the **Kaolin Clay** as directed in a pump-up sprayer, adding a little mild soap as a spreader-sticker. Keep shaking the sprayer as you spray. **Kaolin Clay** is a “Wettable Powder” that must be kept agitated in order to remain suspended in the water. If the white film on the tree fades due to rain, reapply. Spray early morning or late evening only.

**SPRING – SUMMER:** If eggs were laid in the fruit, larvae develop over 2 – 4 weeks, crawl out of the fruit, and drop to the ground (if the fruit hasn’t already fallen to the ground). Pick up and destroy fruit as soon as it falls. The larvae tunnel into the ground and construct an earthen cell 1 – 3 inches below the surface. They pupate and may develop into adults within 3 – 4 weeks, becoming the second generation PCs of the year. If it is a dry year, there may only be one generation. Second generation adults emerge in July & August, feeding on foliage. If detected, use the same methods as in late winter to reduce PC numbers again.

**FALL:** Spray **Beneficial Nematodes** to help control larvae in the soil. Reapply each fall to maintain **Beneficial Nematode** populations. This has been perhaps the most effective long-term control for us. Clean up debris around the trees (fallen leaves, weeds, brush piles, etc.) and mow closely in areas nearby to reduce the overwintering sites of the adult plum curculio. Removing wild plums in the area may also help.