**Dreaded Peach Tree Thinning Time and Agricultural Pesticide Waste Collection Event**

Most of the peach tree varieties I have seen this year are loaded with peaches. Peaches will often set more fruit than is needed for a good crop. While that is a good thing, it can present problems if the trees are not thinned properly- excess weight can cause limbs to break. Trees that are not thinned may also produce peaches that are small and have poor flavor. Production of excessive fruit in one year may also prevent the tree from producing well the following year. This is a tedious and disagreeable job, but a very necessary one for any peach tree.

According to Dr. Parsons, 8% of blossom set equals a full crop of quality peaches- that means 92% has to go. Thinning should be done shortly after the fruit set, but later is better than never. Fruit should be thinned to 6” intervals on twigs; early varieties are best thinned to 10” because of the short time the fruit have to mature. Do not look down when thinning as it may scare you into thinking you are removing too many peaches. It is best just to stay on task, never looking down. Remember that it takes 191 peaches that are 1 ¾ in diameter to equal a bushel, while it only takes 79 peaches that are 2 ½ in diameter to equal a bushel.

When thinning, be sure to remove all culls, this includes small, misshapen, or double fruit. Again, this year there are a good many double peaches on the trees. This seems to happen when flower buds for this year’s crop, (that were initiated last summer) sustained high temperatures during the flower initiation stage which caused the production of multiple pistils. This results in double or even triple fruit after pollination- these need to be culled.

**Agricultural Pesticide Waste Collection Event**

The Texas Department of Agriculture will be offering an “Agricultural Pesticide Waste Collection Event” at the Cowboy Capital Fairgrounds at 9461 US HWY 67, Stephenville, TX on Tuesday, April 30th from 8:00 AM- 12:00 PM. It has been a very long time since there has been a pesticide collection event near us- if you have inherited unlabeled or other unwanted agricultural pesticides this is the opportunity to get rid of them. There is no charge, and you can dispose of them anonymously. For more information, please call TDA at 214-631-0265.