Why Isn't My Peach Tree Producing Fruit?

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Quick Answer

A peach tree may not produce fruit because of frost damage, too much or too little fruiting wood, poor pruning, or an excessive crop load the year prior. Peaches produce fruit on one-year-old wood, so regular pruning and fruit thinning help the tree produce a healthy crop. If your tree blooms but produces little or no fruit, check for spring frost damage and make sure it is properly pruned and thinned.

Do I Need Two Peach Trees to Get Peaches?

Usually, no. Most peach varieties are self-fruitful, meaning one tree can produce fruit without another peach tree nearby. Some cultivars require cross-pollination with a different peach variety. This second tree should be within a few hundred yards to allow cross-pollination and fruit set. Check the pollination requirements of the variety you choose before buying a tree.

Why Are My Peaches Falling off the Tree?

Some fruit drop is normal. Peach trees often produce more flowers and fruit than they can ripen, so some fruit will naturally fall. A heavy crop can cause problems. If too many peaches remain on the tree, the fruit may stay small and have less sugar, color, and flavor. Heavy crops can also cause branches to break. If fruit is dropping heavily, check the tree for signs of pests or disease, frost damage, and excessive crop load.

How Do I Protect Peaches from Frost?

The best way to reduce frost damage is to choose a good planting site and a variety suited to your location. Once a peach tree is already blooming, protecting a large tree from a hard freeze can be difficult. One option is to drape a frost cloth or burlap over the entire tree to trap radiant heat from the soil. Consider adding a small heat source under the canopy before putting the cover on. Peaches have different frost thresholds at different stages of development. When in bloom, the critical temperature at which you'll start to see some fruit loss is 28°F.

How Do I Get Bigger Peaches?

The most effective way to improve peach size is to reduce the number of peaches on the tree. Peach trees often set more fruit than they can successfully ripen. When too many fruits remain, they compete for the tree's available resources. The remaining fruit can be smaller and have less sugar, color, and flavor. Focus on proper pruning and timely thinning. Other factors that contribute to fruit size include:

- Variety of peach (Some varieties naturally grow larger fruit)
- Fertilization program
- Adequate irrigation

How Do I Thin Peaches?

Thin peaches in spring while the fruit is still small, about 3/4-inch in diameter, ideally within 30 days after bloom ends. Early thinning helps the remaining peaches grow larger and reduces the risk of broken branches.

Gently twist off excess peaches by hand, beginning with small or damaged fruit, leaving one peach approximately every six inches along the branch. Spread the remaining fruit evenly and check again as peaches grow. Remove additional fruit if branches become overloaded.

References

- USU Extension — How to Grow Peaches in Your Garden
- USU Extension — FAQs | Fruit | Small Acreage | Production Horticulture
- USU Extension — Backyard Fruit Production in Utah’s High Mountain Valleys

- USU Extension — Critical Temperatures for Frost Damage in Fruit Trees
- OSU Extension — Fruit thinning

Adapted from USU Extension yard and garden resources.

Contact

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