

# PESTS & DISEASES – PLUM MOTH

Plum Moth can affect plums, damsons and gages. The Plum moth produces caterpillars that live and feed inside the developing fruits they can be up to 12mm long with a pale pink body and a brown head.

**DAMAGE:** Signs that a tree is infected by the moth can be that the fruits are not formed properly, that there are visible light brown excrement pellets near the stone. Fruits often ripen prematurely with some falling from the tree.

**TREATMENT:** A Pheromone trap can be used to lure males. This will reduce mating resulting in fewer fertile eggs being laid. The trap should monitor up to five average size trees within a range of 15 metres (50 feet) of the trap. It should be hung at around head height on the windward side of the tree (or group of trees). After five weeks replace the sticky insert and lure, with the second set provided. Inspect the trap regularly – the plum fruit moth is small (about 6mm or a quarter inch long) dark coloured, and rests with its wings folded to form a triangular shape. If you are catching more than 50 moths per week infestation is high and a suitable spray should be applied a week later. Continue monitoring and apply further sprays if needed. Remove the trap by the beginning of September and dispose of the lure and sticky insert.



## HOW ARE DISEASES SPREAD?

Most fungal infections are carried by spores being blown, from one plant to another by the wind, or transmitted in water splashes. Bacterial infections are spread in the same way although insects can also carry them. Viruses are transmitted by sap-feeding insects, especially aphids.

## PREVENTING DISEASE

Plants are most at risk when they have just been pruned or are damaged. It is imperative to prune at the correct time of the year – Winter season (when the tree is dormant (lost all of it's leaves)) for fruits with a pip; apples, pears and quinces. Growing season (July/August even if fruit is on the tree) for stone fruits; apricots, cherries, gages, nectarines, peaches and plums.

### ■ Do not overcrowd trees

Make sure they are planted with sufficient space between. Free-standing trees should not be planted near fences/walls/buildings etc.

### ■ Weed, water and feed your trees

Especially through dry spells. The healthier your tree is the more resistant to infection and disease it will be.

### ■ Disinfect tools

Before and after use, especially when pruning.

### ■ Dispose of infected matter

Clear all windfalls, pruning and any infected/diseased leaves. Burn or remove from site rather than composting.