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## Plum, Prune (Fresh): Earwigs

Use *Integrated Pest Management (IPM)* for successful plant problem management.

### **Biology**

Earwigs are reddish-brown insects about 3/4" or less in length. Both males and females have pincers at the rear end. Earwigs are largely beneficial, feeding on many pests such as aphids, mites, and nematodes, as well as on algae, fungi, and decaying plant material. However, earwigs can also damage plants. They sometimes feed on flowers, shoot tips, leaves, or fruit. Damaged shoot tips may fail to develop properly, sometimes stunting growth. Damaged leaves exhibit small to large holes. Fruit damage consists of shallow, irregular areas chewed into the surface.

### **Management Options**

#### Non-Chemical Management

- ~ Rolled newspapers or flat boards placed beneath trees can serve both as monitoring devices and as traps for earwigs, which prefer narrow, enclosed hiding places.
- ~ Remove tree wraps, which may provide shelter for earwigs.
- ~ Banding tree trunks with plastic wrap covered with sticky adhesive can prevent earwigs from moving into the tree canopy.

*Select non-chemical management options as your first choice!*

#### Chemical Management

**IMPORTANT:** Visit *Home and Garden Fact Sheets* for more information on using pesticides

Apply around the trunk at ground level only. Use whenever earwigs are detected in noticeable numbers.

**Listed below are examples of pesticides that are legal in Washington. Always read and follow all label directions.**

- ~ Bug Buster-O [Organic]
  - active ingredient: pyrethrins
  - EPA reg no: 1021-1771-54705
- ~ Bull's-Eye Bioinsecticide
  - active ingredient: spinosad (spinosyn A+D)
  - EPA reg no: 62719-314-56872
- ~ Safer Brand BioNEEM Multi-Purpose Insecticide & Repellent Conc [Organic]
  - active ingredient: azadirachtin
  - EPA reg no: 70051-6-42697
- ~ Safer Brand Insect Killing Soap Conc II [Organic]
  - active ingredient: potassium laurate
  - EPA reg no: 42697-60
- ~ This list may not include all products registered for this use.

*Plum, Prune (Fresh): Earwigs*

*Images*



*~ Caption: An adult European earwig  
~ Photo by: M. Bush*



*~ Caption: European earwig  
~ Photo by: Unknown*