



Shaker injury caused in 1960 has become infected with *Ceratocystis* on this French prune (top arrow). In 1961, a shaker head contacted the lower edge of this canker increasing the injury (arrow below). Contamination of the shaker head with spores and other cells of the fungus probably occurred, spreading the fungus to injuries on other trees.

and primary scaffold limbs, it may be advisable to shake smaller branches. Cankers that might appear on these smaller branches could then be pruned out without seriously threatening the loss of a tree.

Cracks in crushed bark allow the *Ceratocystis* fungus to grow into the bark and to colonize the inner tissues from which it can parasitize healthy tissues adjacent to the bruise thus causing a canker. The diseased bark usually takes on a water-soaked or darkened appearance and amber-colored gum exudes from the margins around the canker; however, with some cankers little or no gumming occurs. A characteristic red stain is usually present in the diseased tissues of prunes—in contrast to the dark brown discoloration of infected tissues in cankers of almond and apricot trees.

In all cankers, a brownish-black stain permeates deep into the heartwood causing black streaks that often extend many inches past the margins of the canker in the bark. Previous studies have indicated that the stain extends far in advance of the fungus infection, however.

There are no sure methods for curing or stopping the spread of *Ceratocystis* cankers in infected limbs or trunks. Partial success in stopping the spread of individual cankers in almond trees has been attained by cutting away diseased bark tissues. The cuts must be extended to approximately 2 inches beyond the margins of the canker in the bark. Cutting away the diseased bark tissues exposes non-infected cambium that may form a callus around the wound. Such treatment

has, in some cases, arrested further canker development in almonds. Painting the cut-away area of the limb or trunk with a disinfectant, such as 0.3 per cent phenyl mercury nitrate mixed with 8 parts glycerol and 2 parts lanolin, has helped forestall the invasion of the wound by other organisms.

Almonds from trees treated with this mercurial disinfectant have been analyzed by the Pesticide Residue Research Laboratory at the Davis campus and no mercury residues have been found. However, this mercurial preparation has not as yet been registered for use on almond trees by California or Federal agencies. The use of Bordeaux paste has been unsatisfactory for treatment of these wounds due to its toxic effects on the tree.

Cutting out diseased branches and even scaffold limbs—if the cankers have not already advanced into the crotch—offers another possible control measure. Such prunings should be burned because there is evidence to indicate that insects, such as borers, may aid in the dissemination of the fungus. Pruning wounds are apparently not prone to infection by *Ceratocystis*. Only bruise type injuries have allowed growth of these cankers in almonds, apricots, and prunes.

*Ceratocystis* cankers in prunes should

not be confused with the canker and dieback condition in prunes resulting from the infection of sun-injured limbs by *Cytospora rubescens*. This fungus is another canker-causing organism that is present in most prune and plum orchards of California and is particularly severe in its attack on President plums and Imperial prunes. A future article will discuss the nature and possible control of the canker and dieback caused by *Cytospora*.

**Methods for minimizing possible injuries to trees, in relation to shaker operation and design, are presented in the following article.**

*J. E. DeVay is Associate Professor of Plant Pathology, University of California, Davis; F. L. Lukezic is Laboratory Technician, Plant Pathology Department, U.C., Davis; Harley English is Professor of Plant Pathology, U.C., Davis; K. Uriu is Assistant Pomologist, U.C., Davis; C. J. Hansen is Professor of Pomology, U.C., Davis.*

*Farm Advisors Art Retan and Clem Meith of Butte County, Roy Jeter of Glenn County, Don Rough of San Joaquin County, Dave Chaney of Sutter County, Bill Stice of Colusa County, Dave Holmberg of Yolo County and Ronald Tyler of San Benito County cooperated.*

## MINIMIZING BARK INJURY WITH MECHANICAL SHAKERS

Shaker injuries to the bark of trees can be minimized by careful operation of properly designed equipment. One careful grower, Andrew Micke of Tehama County, has been harvesting prunes with a commercial shaker for five years with no indication of serious damage. He has lost a few limbs but no trees. He was probably the first person to mechanically shake prunes with a tractor shaker, according to extension service records.

The first thing that can be done to minimize tree damage is to select a shaker that does the least amount of damage to the tree. For example, the University designed "C-type" clamp, tested and used on inertia shakers, has been shown to result in minimum damage to the tree at the point of attachment—as reported in California Agriculture, August, 1961. Minimum damage results from the linear motion for clamping. Regardless of limb size, the force applied to the limb is nearly in line with the direction of force application. Thus, the total force and also any shear forces on the limb are minimized.

In addition, the hydraulic circuit used

for clamping is also designed to yield a minimum force on the limb. This is accomplished by closing the clamp with a low pressure, then blocking the oil flow so as to be able to develop the higher pressures and forces required for shaking.

In addition to the selection of equipment, the following points are also important:

1. Adjust shaker properly.
2. Employ careful operators.
3. Advise operators to avoid infected areas.
4. Carry out preventive sanitation measures to retard spreading of disease.
5. Prune trees for mechanized operations.

Studies are being continued on all phases of the mechanical injury problem.—*P. A. Adrian, Agricultural Engineer, ARS, U. S. Department of Agriculture, and Associate in Agricultural Engineering and R. B. Fridley, Assistant Agricultural Engineer, University of California, Davis.*