

## APPLE SCAB

Apple Scab is a fungal infection which is common on apple, crabapple, pear, mountain ash, and hawthorn trees. It causes the leaves to turn yellow and drop prematurely. In severe cases it can defoliate trees, which will weaken them but is usually not fatal.

Apple Scab is a consistent disease problem year-to-year in Michigan orchards and for Michigan homeowners. Primary scab infection is initiated by ascospores produced in leaf litter from infected leaves that overwintered from the previous season. Controlling primary scab is critical for preventing fruit infections and keeping scab from becoming a full-season problem.

In order for scab to infect a leaf, there must be a film of moisture on newly emerged leaves for 10-20 hours when the spores of the apple scab are present. If we experience a long period of rainy weather at the time when there were lots of spores in the air to infect the leaves, the Apple Scab infection may be severe. Once infection has taken place, the cycle of spore release continues throughout the summer.

To avoid Apple Scab, the first step is to plant resistant trees. Apple Scab resistant varieties include Pristine -70 FB, William's Pride -55, Redfree -49, FB Prima -28, Initial -26, Priscilla -14, Crimson Crisp -11 FB Jonafree -7, Dayton -7, Scarlet O'Hara -7, and FB Pixie Crunch -7.

If you have a tree which is susceptible to apple scab, rake and burn the leaves that have fallen off the tree before spring. Prune trees to increase air circulation) which will allow the leaves to dry faster. A fungicide sprayed on the trees at bud break, usually early May, should be repeated throughout mid-June. Use a fungicide labeled for control of Apple Scab on the type of tree you are trying to protect. Always read and follow label instructions.

*Ref: MSU Extension Website, A review of Apple Scab Resistant Varieties for Michigan Commercial Growers, and SDHI Fungicides for Apple Scab*

The **Master Gardener Hotline** is open from April to October, Monday through Friday. Lines are available 9:00 am to noon and 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm at 888-678-3464

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