What is Apple Scab?

Apple scab is a foliar fungal disease caused by *Venturia inaequalis*. It is not considered a serious threat to crabapple or apple trees; however, repeated annual infections can weaken the tree making it more susceptible to other insect or disease problems.

Apple scab can seriously reduce the aesthetic quality of apple trees; heavy infections can reduce growth, vigor, flowering, and apple yields. Apple scab is dependent on cool, wet weather to develop.

Biology

- The pathogen overwinters in infected leaves on the ground from the previous year.
- In spring, overwintered spores (ascospores) mature and are discharged over a period of 5 to 9 weeks.
- Wind and splashing rain carries spores from infected leaves to new growth on nearby trees where new infections begin.
- In late summer or early fall, the primary infections produce secondary spores and create new infections, which can continue through the growing season during wet periods.

Susceptible hosts

All *Malus* species, including apple, fruit trees, flowering crabapples, and mountain ash.

Signs and Symptoms

- Brown to olive, irregular-shaped spots on the leaves in late spring.
- Spots become dark and velvety in appearance.
- Heavily infected leaves may become yellow and fall off the tree from late spring through late summer.
- Fruit may also be infected and display similar symptoms to those on leaves.
Apple Scab Treatment Strategies

Treatment Strategy

Minor apple scab is not injurious to the tree; however, severe infections will weaken the tree and make it unsightly.

One method of treatment is to apply a fungicide, such as **Myclotect™**, 2 – 4 times in the spring as the leaves emerge. It is important to know that fungicide applications are preventive only and need to be applied as leaves emerge and then 14 days later. Properly applied fungicides are 95% effective. Midsummer treatments after symptoms begin to appear will be unsuccessful.

Alternative Treatment Strategy

The use of a growth hormone regulator, such as **Cambistat®**, to minimize the effects of foliar diseases can be effective. Cambistat® reduces vegetative growth and increases the thickness of the leaf cuticle, making it more difficult for the disease to grow into the leaf. Unlike fungicides which set up a barrier on the leaf to fungal infection, Cambistat® works by physically changing the leaf structure. If you are looking for complete control, you will also need to spray with fungicides, especially during wet springs. One treatment of Cambistat® is effective for 3 years.

Cultural practices to reduce disease source

- Rake and remove fallen leaves from yard in autumn to reduce spores.
- Each winter, prune suckers and branches throughout the crown to improve air circulation.
- Divert sprinkler heads away from the foliage of the tree. Constant moisture helps the fungus grow.

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DIY Shopping List

**Option 1:**
Application Type - Foliar spray

**DIY Product/Equipment Needed**
- Myclotect™
- Hand pump sprayer with wand
- Gloves/Safety glasses

**Option 2:**
Application Type – Soil drench

**DIY Product/Equipment Needed**
- Cambistat®
- Measuring or diameter tape
- Graduated cylinder measuring in mL
- Shovel
- Bucket or watering can