



St. Croix
Tree Service, Inc

651-770-3744 or 715-749-3475

www.stcroixtreeservice.com



TREE FACTS

Apple Scab

In late spring or early summer, foliage of several cultivars of flowering crabapple may become blighted, causing heavy defoliation by mid or late summer. The disease primarily affects leaves, although it frequently blemishes fruits.

In the field you can best identify scab by carefully inspecting infected leaves. Scab lesions or spots are roughly circular and range in size from less than a pinhead to 1/2 inch in diameter. The margins of lesions are typically fuzzy or feathery. Spots may occur on both sides of leaves. Scab lesions are velvety and olive green to black. Heavy attacks of scab affect entire leaf; leaves become brown and seem coated with a gray-green moldy covering. People sometimes confuse such infections with fire blight disease.

Older leaves gradually become somewhat resistant to scab, but most crabapple varieties continue developing new leaves into late summer. Thus, new infections can occur on young leaves nearly all summer long in wet seasons.

Heavily infected trees begin losing leaves in July and August, and may be virtually defoliated by early September. Sometimes leaf loss causes poor flowering the next season, and it may reduce tree vigor and life expectancy.

CAUSE - FUNGUS

The fungus produces two types of spores. Spores from last year's infected leaves lying on the ground cause infections in spring. These spores, called ascospores, are produced sexually and are spread by wind and splashing rains. These spores infect plants throughout spring and possibly into July. Fungal lesions on new foliage or fruit reproduce through asexual spores, called conidia, that are easily spread by wind.

CONTROL

Control scab with one or a combination of the following approaches.

RESISTANCE

Most commonly grown crabapple cultivars—Almey, Hopa, Eleyi, and Radiant—are severely susceptible to scab. Fairly resistant cultivars such as Adams, Bob

White, Dolgo, and a number of others are remarkable more attractive during scab outbreaks than are susceptible cultivars. We feel you should select resistant cultivars for future planting.

SANITATION

Ornamental crabs reasonably isolated from other susceptible crabs, hawthorns, or apples benefit if you thoroughly clean up diseased leaves. For best results, rake and burn leaves in fall before they become brittle and break up, or before they blow into inaccessible areas. Removing leaves destroys the local source of early spring inoculum and often eliminates infestations unless asexual spores blow in after June from outside sources. Sanitation succeeds better in dry years than in wet years; it may eliminate the need for fungicides in some situations.

FUNGICIDE TREATMENTS

In the Spring, chemicals are safe and effective when used with good judgment. Two well-timed fungicide applications @ app. 14 day intervals in the Spring limit scab disease and keeps leaves from falling prematurely.

Quick Facts

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