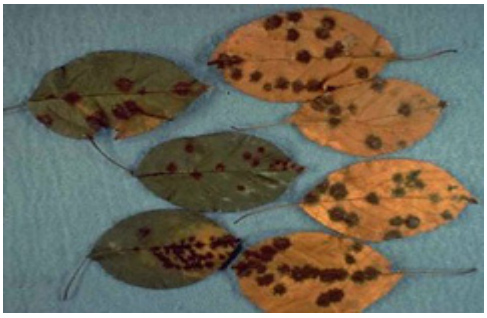
APPLE SCAB

Information provided by The Morton Arboretum

Apple scab is one of the more serious diseases of ornamental crabapples. It is caused by the fungus Venturia inaqualis. Apple scab affects members of the rose family, which includes cultivars of apple (Malusspp.), crabapple (Malus spp.). hawthorn (Crataegus spp.), mountain-ash (Sorbus spp.), cotoneaster (Cotoneaster spp.), firethorn (Pyracantha spp.) and common pear (Pyrus spp.).

SYMPTOMS

Apple scab can affect leaves, blossoms and fruit. Small velvety brown to olive-green spots that enlarge and darken appear on leaves and fruit in the spring and summer. Highly infected leaves may curl up, become distorted in shape, become yellow and fall off. Apple scab is most severe during spring and early summer when the humidity is high and the temperature is moderate.



CONTROL

Resistant Varieties: The best way to prevent apple scab is to plant resistant crabapple varieties. Hinsdale Nurseries recommends 'Donald Wyman', 'Prairiefire', 'Red Jewel' and 'Sutyzam' (Sugar Thyme).

Clean-Up: The fungus overwinters on fallen leaves and infected twigs so collecting and removing these leaves and twigs as soon as they drop will reduce the source of infection.

Spraying: Apple scab can be effectively managed with fungicides. The first spray application should be at bud swell in the spring and additional sprays at 10- to 14-day intervals. Read label instructions on container for dilution rates and methods of application. Hinsdale Nurseries offers Espoma 3-in-1 Disease Control. A preventive spraying should happen yearly to control the fungus.

Scab-resistant varieties are still slightly susceptible to the fungus, so preventive spraying in the spring and fall leaf cleanup is recommended. It is very unlikely that apple scab will kill your tree; however, if the tree is severely infected, it will completely defoliate by mid to late summer. The early defoliation does weaken the tree slightly, but most of the damage is aesthetic.