TORONTO
Parks, Forestry & Recreation
Urban Forestry Services
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Forest Health Care

Apple Scab

Apple Scab is one of the most serious diseases of apple and ornamental crabapple trees. The disease is caused by fungus *Venturia inequalis*. It survives the winter in the infected leaves and fruit, fallen from trees. In wet and cool spring weather, the fungus infects young leaves, flower parts and fruit. Although the disease makes the trees look unsightly, the fungus will rarely kill a tree.

Host and Damage

Susceptible hosts are:
- Apple
- Flowering crabapple
- Mountain ash
- Hawthorn

The Apple scab fungus infects leaves, flower parts, fruit and succulent twigs.

Symptoms on leaves arise in spring as small olive-green spots. Later these spots can darken nearly to black. Infected leaves became distorted in shape, turn yellow and drop early in the summer.

Symptoms on fruit first occur as raised small dark, areas. These spots enlarge and turn brown and corky. Fruit becomes distorted and cracked and drops prematurely.

Specific Management Practices for Control of the Apple Scab:

- Consider using resistant tree varieties. There are several apple and crabapple varieties resistant to apple scab. Consult your local nursery or call our Forest Health Care Specialist at 392-1436.

- Rake and dispose of fallen leaves and fruit in fall. They are a source of infection for next year. Leaves may be composted by City composting programs.

- High humidity levels contribute to disease spread. Proper thinning of the crown will improve air circulation. This pruning technique may require an assistance of a specialist.

General Management Practices To Improve Plant Health:

- Water your trees during dry spells. Infrequent, but deep soaking preferably during the early morning hours is recommended. Water absorbing roots are located in the upper 25 cm of the soil and extend outward well beyond the canopy dripline.

- Place organic mulch, (e.g. wood chips), or living mulch, (e.g. ground cover plants) around tree bases to keep the soil moist for longer periods and encourage healthier roots.

- Avoid unnecessary excavating, grade changes, soil compaction, root cutting or hard surfacing around trees. These activities destroy vital roots, which may lead to the decline or death of trees.

- Refrain from using salt or herbicides around trees.

Forest Health Care is a holistic approach to tree care that focuses on improving the health of trees in an urban environment. Our objective is a healthy, sustainable urban forest. Trees in urban forests are often stressed by compacted soil, drought, poor planting and pruning techniques, air pollution, road salt, damage from construction and much more. Trees planted in the right sites and properly maintained are less likely to suffer and are more resistant to pest problems.

Pest problems are managed using a decision making process, that considers the following:

- Identification of the host and the pest.
- Monitoring of the host and the pest.
- Selection of the appropriate management strategy.
- Evaluation of the management plan.

Our focus is on pest management programs that are environmentally, socially and economically sound.