

Protect Apples From Maggot Damage Now

Growing apples in Chicagoland is a trying experience for a number of reasons. But, according to James A. Fizzell, University of Illinois Extension Horticulturist, Rolling Meadows, Illinois, apple maggot probably destroys more apples and causes more people to give up than any other single factor.

This is because apple maggot is a late summer pest and most people give up on their spraying just about the time the insect starts causing trouble.

The adult maggots are slow moving flies, slightly larger than house flies, and with black bands on their wings. They start to appear in late June and females may begin egg laying at that time. However, the peak period of egg laying is early to mid-August and will continue into September.

Eggs are laid in punctures in the skin of the apples. The punctured area ceases to grow, creating a dimple. Many such spots on the fruit cause the apple to look uneven or lumpy. Not all of the eggs hatch, but many do, and the maggot feeding inside the apple makes it unfit to eat. Many maggot-infested apples drop to the ground. Red varieties are particularly susceptible to damage.

For successful control, there are some practices that will reduce maggot injury. Picking up all of the dropped, infested fruit will reduce the number of emerging adult flies and, in turn, the egg laying. Spraying with an insecticide at regular 10 to 14 day intervals from late June until early September will greatly reduce the damage from apple maggots. Use an all-purpose fruit spray containing imidan, malathion plus methoxychlor, imidan 50W, or diazinon 50W. Sevin 50W will control the maggots but will often increase the mites on fruit trees.

Avoid using emulsifiable or liquid-concentrate insecticides. They often cause the apple skin to be rough. Follow the label directions for mixing and handling precautions for any insecticide you use.

Keep Those Annuals Looking Good

It's already mid-season for our gardens, but that doesn't mean the work stops. According to Cindy Garber, summer Horticulturist with the University of Illinois in Rolling Meadows, now is the time to rejuvenate over-grown annuals which have probably become spindly and growing out of bounds.

Start by shearing back overly long stems of petunias, verbena, coleus, pansy, bells of Ireland, wax begonia, alyssum and ageratum.

New growth will begin at the base of each plant resulting in vigorous new compact plants and improved flowering.

For continued flowering it is important to remove spent blossoms on snapdragons, pansies, zinnias, cosmos, and tall marigolds. If you let these plants go to seed they stop blooming.

Removing old flowers from petunias, annual phlox, verbena, moss rose, and dianthus is tedious and does not seem to affect flowering.

A good time to rejuvenate your flowers is just before you leave on vacation. When you return your plants should be well on their way to recovery.

If you plan to be away for an extended period, make arrangements for someone to water the plants should the dry weather continue.

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