

## Do Your Trees Have Galls?

By Jeffrey D. Hahn  
Assistant Extension Entomologist  
Minnesota Extension Service

Odd looking growths on trees often give the impression that trees are stricken with a disease. These deformities, known as galls, are really caused by insects.

Galls result when insects feed on new plant tissue in the spring. Insect saliva stimulates the otherwise normal plant cells to deform as they grow. These abnormal cells multiply and surround the insect, creating a safe haven where it lives during the summer.

Virtually all plants have galls, but we see them most often on maples, oaks, ash, hackberry, roses and spruce. Some of the common galls we encounter in Minnesota are maple velvet gall, jumping oak gall, ash flower gall, hackberry blister gall and cool spruce gall.

Healthy, mature trees are not normally weakened or stressed by galls and control is applied to protect plants' appearance. Once galls are seen, it is too late for control during that season.

If a very young tree or an evergreen is heavily infested, control is justified for next year. Healthy, mature trees that suffer through several consecutive years of heavy gall formation should also be treated.

The best time to spray your tree varies with the specific gall. If it is desirable to treat your tree or shrub next year, identify the gall for the best time to spray in the spring.

## Anthracnose Abundant Following Wet Weather

By Cynthia Ash  
Assistant Extension Plant Pathologist  
Minnesota Extension Service

Anthracnose is a fungal disease which infects ash, maple, sycamore, walnut, burl and white oak.

Prolonged cool, wet weather this spring has resulted in abundant leaf spot and defoliation. Symptoms are first evident on the new growth as it emerges. Purple to brown spots the diameter of a pencil lead appear and expand rapidly to blight the entire leaf. Infected leaves are quickly shed by the tree, causing the owner to become alarmed. Persistent cool wet conditions may cause dieback of the new growth in ash, oak, sycamore and walnut.

If anthracnose is present for several seasons, it can weaken a healthy tree, making it vulnerable to attack by insects and diseases. Defoliation by anthracnose in an already weakened tree can result in decreased vigor and decline. Generally, fungicides are not necessary. Benomyl (Benlate) is labeled for preventive application to shade trees. Preventive means it must be applied before the fungal infection occurs and reapplied on a regular basis through the cool, wet weather season.

The vigor of the tree can be maintained by proper watering during dry periods. Fertilizer should be applied to soils deficient in plant nutrients. Removal of fallen leaves and dead branches may limit the spread of the disease, especially on isolated trees.

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