Diagnose The Disease

Cedar apple rust is a fungal diseases that infects Eastern red, common, and many species of juniper, and in turn apple trees. The disease can also infect pear, hawthorn, quince, serviceberry and crabapple trees.

Symptoms

Cedar apple rust is a fugal disease that requires juniper plants to complete its complicated two-year life cycle. Spores overwinter as a reddish-brown gall on young twigs of various juniper species (red cedar). In early spring during wet weather, these galls swell and bright orange masses of spores are blown by the wind where they infect susceptible apple and crabapple trees. The spores that develop on these trees will only infect junipers the following year. From year to year, the disease must pass from junipers to apples to junipers again; it cannot spread between apple trees.

Juniper gall

On apple and crabapple, look for pale yellow pinhead sized spots on the upper surface of the leaves shortly after bloom. These gradually enlarge to bright orange-yellow spots, which make the disease easy to identify. Orange spots may develop on the fruit as well. Heavily infected leaves may drop prematurely.

Controls

Choose resistant cultivars from Adams when available. If cedar apple rust is a continuing problem, fungicides can be applied weekly starting with bud break on apples and crabapples. Fungicide applications are used to protect the tree from spores being released by the juniper host in mid-spring. This occurs only once a year, so additional applications after this springtime spread are not necessary.

Rake up and dispose of fallen leaves and other debris from under apple trees. Remove galls from infected junipers. In some cases, juniper plants should be removed entirely.

Contact Adams for other possible solutions.

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