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Apple Tree Spray Program

Apples are such a delight to eat, but they can be a “real pain” to grow. Apples are one of the few fruits for which we recommend a regular spray program. In order to raise an acceptable fruiting crop, you will need to maintain this program throughout the growing year. The two primary pests you will need to control are insects and diseases. An insecticide is used to kill insects and a fungicide is used to control diseases. People sometimes confuse these or misuse them. Normally insecticides will have little effect on diseases and fungicides seldom affect insects. Most fungicides and insecticides are targeted to a specific problem. Therefore, it is important to know the targeted pest.

Purdue University Cooperative Extension Bulletin ID-146, “Managing Pests in the Home Fruit Plantings,” is available from the Cooperative Extension Service. This bulletin can help you develop a better and more specific spray program. For your convenience, we have outlined a general spray program to get you started. Most garden centers offer a Multi-Purpose-Fruit-Spray (MPFS) which contains an insecticide and a fungicide. If this is not available, you can buy the chemicals separately and mix them as needed. Follow label instructions precisely. Before you resort to a “spray-only” approach, don’t forget that cultural practices are of major importance in controlling diseases and insects. See our handout titled “**Fruit: Good Cultural Practices**” for tips.

Spraying

- *Dormant Spray*: Use dormant oil plus lime sulfur. Spray in early spring as buds begin to swell but before they open. Apply when the temperature will remain above 45° F for 48 hours.
- *Pre-bloom*: Use a multipurpose fruit spray one time after tip buds open but before flower buds open.
- *Bloom*: Use a fungicide (Captan). Spray only if blossom rot is a problem. *Do not use an insecticide with this spray because you want bee activity during this time period.* The use of an insecticide will KILL bees.
- *After Petal Fall*: Use a multipurpose spray. Once 75% of the petals have dropped begin a 10-14 day interval spray program and continue to within 3-4 weeks of harvest.

For more information, visit: www.hort.purdue.edu/ext/conhort.html