

Plant Disease Notes

Sooty Blotch on Apples

Sooty blotch is one of the most common diseases of apple in the Southeast. The fungi causing this disease (*Gloeodes* sp., *Leptodontidium* sp., and other fungi) affect all cultivars of apple.

Symptoms. The sooty blotch fungi only grow on the surface of the fruit, giving the fruit an unsightly appearance. Sooty blotch fungal colonies are olive green to black on mature fruit. The colonies may be round or feathery, have diffuse margins, and cover the entire fruit.

Transmission and Persistence. The complex of fungi that cause sooty blotch grows on the waxy cuticle of the apple fruit. These fungi survive from one season to the next on apple twigs as well as on other perennial vegetation that have a waxy cuticle. The fungi are dispersed by wind and in windblown rainwater to developing

fruit in the spring and early summer. Secondary spread occurs from these initial sites throughout the summer months. The optimum temperature for growth is between 65 and 80 degrees F. It usually takes 20 to 25 days after infection for the symptoms to appear on the fruit.

Control. Control of sooty blotch is achieved through dormant and summer pruning and tree training that open trees and facilitate drying of the fruit surface and allow for uniform fungicide deposition on the fruit. Fungicides need to be applied on a preventative basis beginning at second cover and continuing at 10- to 14-day intervals until harvest. See Extension publication ANR-500-A, *Alabama Pest Management Handbook, Volume 1* for a list of recommended fungicides and spray schedules.



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For more information, call your county Extension office. Look in your telephone directory under your county's name to find the number.

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