

Problem: Apple, Russetting



Host: Apple and pear

Description: A tan-colored, corky tissue on the surface of apples is often called 'russetting' and is caused by damage to epidermal cells. It is a condition of the 'skin' only so the usability of the apple is not reduced. Golden Delicious is one of the most susceptible varieties while red varieties are not as likely to develop russetting. Possible causes of russetting include:

- * Wetness from heavy dew or rainfall on the fruit surface for several hours when the fruit was initially developing, along with cold temperatures during the late bloom period
- * There is also some relationship between the use of certain pest control materials that contain sulfur, copper, zinc, calcium as well as products formulated as emulsifiable concentrates and an increased level of russetting
- * Various fungi including that which causes powdery mildew (*Podosphaera leucotricha*) and bacteria have been associated with russetting
- * Excessive fertilization

Recommendations: Although russetting can result in an unappealing appearance of the fruit, it is a condition that is only 'skin deep' and will not influence the use or storage of the apples unless the russetting leads to fruit cracking. Practices that can reduce russetting include the following.

- * Plant varieties less susceptible to russetting.
- * Prune trees for better air movement and thin fruit to one about every 4 inches on average.
- * Avoid spraying emulsifiable concentrates. Wettable powders are less likely to cause damage.

References:

1. [Plant Disease Control, Apple—Fruit Russeting](#), Oregon State University
2. [Apple Russeting](#), University of Minnesota, Yard & Garden Brief

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