Building Block Plant Diseases

Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

Cedar-Apple Rust

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Most disease-causing organisms only need to infect a single kind of plant during their lives. The cedar-apple rust fungus is different. It needs to infect both apples (or crabapples) and junipers to complete its entire life cycle.

Look for small, brown, brain-like cedar-apple rust galls (swellings) on juniper branches. In spring, the galls will ooze bright orange, marmalade-like masses. Spores (kind of like tiny, fungal seeds) from these masses infect apple trees.

On apple leaves, the cedar-apple rust fungus leads to large, yellow spots. Tendrils (like jellyfish tentacles) form on the undersides of the spots and make spores that infect junipers. The fungus can also infect apple fruits.

To control cedar-apple rust, do not grow apples and junipers near one another. Two to three miles apart is best. Yikes!! Also, prune galls from junipers. Finally, grow types (varieties) of apples that get less of the disease.

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