



Kaolin Clay at Harvest Time

Posted by [Peter Drevniok](#)

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[Peter Drevniok](#)

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September 13, 2023 01:15PM

Hi,

Registered: 10 years ago

Posts: 31

How do people deal with kaolin clay (Surround WP) residue at harvest time?

I only sprayed twice in mid/ late June and early July but there is still residue (13 Sept).

I spray water on the harvested apples and rub them but when they dry there is still residue. I then have to take a dry cloth and wipe every single apple.

I find this an onerous task.

Any suggestions on how to go about this to make it easier will be appreciated?

Peter Drevniok

Wakefield, Quebec

zone 4b

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[Brittany Kordick](#)

[Re: Kaolin Clay at Harvest Time](#)

September 17, 2023 09:01PM

Registered: 4 years ago

Posts: 211

I wish I had a suggestion to help clean kaolin clay off fruit, but I'm afraid I don't, and that's the reason that we discontinued kaolin sprays entirely in our orchard. We would love to use kaolin more on our apples, but like you, found that even when limited to a handful of early season sprays, the residue was persistent at harvest time. We recently purchased a used Tew produce washer and are intending to spray some apples with Surround specifically to test how well the washer brushes can take clay off, but best case scenario, assume that while the brushes may remove most of the Surround from the apple's surface area, any clay particles within the calyx and stem ends will remain. While discussing the issue with fellow orchardists a couple of years ago, someone suggested touting the teeth whitening benefits of apples treated with kaolin clay or alternatively, setting up a "you-wash" station at the farm.

But seriously, from a chemistry standpoint, kaolin clay appears to be set up for steadfast stickability -- a benefit when we're trying to layer up in-season, but a detriment post-harvest when we need to clean up the fruit for sale. As far as I know, no one has figured out a better way than elbow grease or mechanical removal to clean up Surround or Purshade treated fruits. I suspect that any solution would lie in the chemistry of the material, soaking fruit in a solution that allows water to better penetrate between the layers of clay minerals. I was even wondering about somehow using electrolysis to loosen clay particles, but I think we'll just stick with forgoing kaolin clay applications in our orchard.

Good luck, and if you do come up with a way to clean Surround off efficiently, the holistic orcharding world would definitely love to hear about it!

[Kordick Family Farm](#)

Westfield, NC

Zone 7a

Edited 1 time(s). Last edit at 09/17/2023 09:03PM by Brittany Kordick.

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