



severe scab loading

Posted by [Tim Bates](#)[Forum List](#) [Message List](#) [New Topic](#)[Tim Bates](#)[severe scab loading](#)

November 29, 2012 05:53AM

Registered: 11 years ago

Posts: 58

We definitely don't have true winters here in northern California and scab is a huge obstacle. [See [Conidia Divide](#) discussion to understand why.] Michael has pointed out to me and hinted in *Holistic Orchard* that compost tea alone will probably not control scab. I don't listen very well and have kept dogging compost tea hoping to find the right combination of additives and different compost mixes to have an effect I can measure with my own observation. Also have been pretty diligent with other holistic suggestions with ground compost and foliar apps and tall grass in spring etc. I have not given up sulfur but have a Tea Block that I wait until conditions are sooo perfect that I use a little micronized sulfur to make sure I don't get it too bad. Well 2012 (and 2011) were weather patterns for the books and I have had the worst scab ever. A slight aside- Michael was right on pg 151 of HO that pear scab really builds up in susceptible varieties (Bartlett) and will spread to other ones thought not to get "it". I had 90%+ pear scab in Bartletts (gave bins of ugliest pears in the world away) and plenty in Bosc and Hardys--before unknown. Anyway, from my own observations (can't prove it) when the scab dust has settled by June there was no more damage in the Tea Block than the sulfured blocks. I must confess I used a little too freewheelin' style in 2012 with my sulfur applications--leaned towards less use when weather wasn't too threatening--then got hammered in late May rains. I did so want compost tea to do it.

So, I have begun re-experimenting with neem. I did find beneficial effects in earlier years --shiny leaves and white flies went away--but thought it too hard to handle and EXPENSIVE. Since Michael has persisted on the benefits of neem (for a hell a time now) I bought several gallons in 2012 and have made 2 applications so far--one near the fourth pulsing spray and one pre-harvest (not enough money to *pulse away*) and am quite pleased so far. I used compost tea as my effective microbes and fish hydrolysate with the neem. One more damn aside--I have been told more than once that molasses grows bacteria rather than fungi so I don't add "sugar" to my tea--comments? Since my crop was large this year (but ugly) I have enough bucks to buy a 55 gallon drum. (Hint: Uline makes a drum heater to keep your neem viscous.) I'll be able to do the season-long neem program in 2013 plus the fall holistic spray in the next little while (big rains right now) as apple leaves never completely drop until the new year arrives here.

So, my question to other neemsters out there is: With a rather severe load of scab out there from 2012, should I switch to the 4 pulsing sprays (with tea) as scab control? Michael has told me he has been sulfur free for 3 years now. A goal in this lifetime is to control both apple and pear scab without sulfur no matter what the cost. Sure was hoping "tea" would do it--made on farm no outside inputs! Michael also mentions on pg 151 using copper on pears to help "end" the scab load. So, use some copper and sulfur in 2013 to "help" the neem out? Ideas? Thanks, Tim

[The Apple Farm](#)

Zone 8b in California

Edited 3 time(s). Last edit at 03/18/2013 03:50AM by Michael Phillips.

[Reply Quote](#)[Michael Phillips](#)[Re: Severe scab loading](#)

November 29, 2012 04:41PM

Moderator

Registered: 11 years ago

Posts: 621

One of the issues here is that both apple and pear scab exists on the trees through the dormant months at Tim's orchard. Pear scab is that way everywhere, as its in twig lesions that the pathogen carries over from season to season. Apple scab offers this curveball to growers in warmer zones where conidia (secondary spores) can overwinter in the buds and other bark crevices. Efforts aimed at complete leaf decomposition on the orchard floor are still just as relevant for either scab. Use of copper early helps to clean up the source sites on the tree. The biological approach here is the *fatty acid knockdown* whereby the combined fats of neem oil and liquid fish are applied at high concentration after leaf fall to breakdown pathogen defenses and then followed with biological reinforcement in the form of compost tea and/or effective microbes 24 hours later. Either way it is essential to do "tree work" as well as "ground work" because the disease has dual launching pads.

Use of conventional organic fungicides (being copper, lime sulfur, and sulfur) contradicts the biological program. There's always a place for moderation, of course, but those fungicides undermine not only the disease pathogens but also the beneficial fungi on the tree surface and in the soil. Violating those connections makes for trees less able to fend off disease which in turn makes "holistic active ingredients" like competitive colonization and immune support less likely to turn the tide. Just saying. There's a place for an allopathic touch when disease potential is severe but at some point you need to make a clean break. I'm betting Tim will get there in 2027 ... just kidding, fella!

[Reply Quote](#)[Michelle and Chris McColl](#)[Re: Severe scab loading](#)

January 21, 2013 11:08PM

Registered: 11 years ago

Posts: 49

Tim, what you write about your battle with scab, your experiences with compost tea and the timing of leaf fall sounds pretty much identical to what we see here at Kalangadoo (except the times are 6 months out of step). Our spring is cool and showery, with one or two scab infection periods almost every week for about three months. Leaves will stay on the trees until late June/early July, or even later on young non-bearing trees. Scab definitely

over-winters on twigs and in buds where we are.

By the way, do you (or can you) grow Sundowner? A sibling of Pink Lady, with the earliest green tip of any variety we grow, whilst being one of the latest to mature. A brilliant apple that ripens about 10 days after Pink Lady, but is highly scab susceptible - probably the most scab susceptible one that we have. A bit like the "canary in the coal mine".

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[Tim Bates](#)

[Re: Severe scab loading](#)

March 12, 2013 04:12AM

Registered: 11 years ago

Posts: 58

M & C, Just read your profile(computer klutz--but Michael just got me straightened out). I thought I was crazy with 80 varieties. Yes I do concentrate on "popular" ones and good keepers. I do have cold storage (limited) to get through Xmas up here. I love your xtra fresh approach. Too far away from enough markets to try that however. Haven't heard of Sundowner. I tend towards "Heirloom" varieties--so I don't have even a Pink Lady tree. The "newest" apple I have is Gold Rush. I too have noticed that green tip does not correlate to ripe fruit. My earliest (green tip) is the crabapples (almost at 1/2 inch right now) but my earliest fruit is Astrachan which hasn't started swelling yet--go figure. Will respond to scab nuances in out in the orchard right now. Take care, Tim

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