



Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association

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MOFGA FACT SHEET # 4

Apple Orchard Activity Calendar for the Northeast

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Introduction

Growing organic tree fruit can be a bit of a challenge, considering the various insects and diseases that like to call your fruit tree home and the relatively short efficacy window of organic control materials; so being attentive to stages of fruit development and biological cycles of pests in your orchard is

critical. Most fruit tree pests emerge in sync with certain annual growth stages of your tree. Understanding these cycles and identifying the points of vulnerability for certain pests will maximize the impact of cultural methods and product applications.

This calendar outlines broadly the timing of activities in the orchard, but differences in location, seasonal

weather fluctuations and local nuances may shift some jobs slightly. You can hang this calendar on your fridge or bulletin board for reference and note when various jobs are best done in your orchard. But please remember, the best orchard activity is the frequent observation of tree and fruit growth, combined with an awareness of life cycles in your orchard ecosystem.

March

- Prune
- Save scions for grafting
- Remove and destroy mummified fruit and disease cankers

April

- Plant new trees
- Bench graft and top-work
- Chip prunings for mulch
- Spray dormant oil, if needed

May

- Train limbs of young trees
- Look for signs of borers weekly
- Remove tent caterpillars
- Hang white cards for European apple sawfly
- Hang codling moth (CM) pheromone traps; track degree days (DD) with first male caught

June

- Apply Surround spray at petal fall; reapply weekly
- Collect and destroy all drops weekly
- Thin fruitlets; remove damaged ones
- Scythe/mow grass and use as mulch
- Apply Bt spray for CM egg hatch at 245 DD

July

- Stop Surround sprays
- Plum curculio migration ends at 308 DD from petal fall
- Hang red sphere traps for apple maggot fly (AMF)
- Place cardboard bands on trunks for pupating CM larvae; destroy and replace every two weeks

August

- Bud graft
- Summer prune water sprouts and suckers
- Apply spinosad for AMF and 2nd generation CM at 1260 DD
- Scythe/mow grass and use as mulch
- Harvest first summer apples!

September

- Continue harvest of late summer and early fall varieties
- Continue to collect and destroy drops weekly

October

- Harvest fall and winter varieties!
- Remove limb spreaders and traps

November

- Apply fish spray, lime and/or compost to aid leaf breakdown, then rotary mow leaves under trees.

December

- Put vole guards in place
- Pull back mulch from trunks
- Root cellars full of fruit!

January – February

- Visit orchard regularly to check for deer, vole or rabbit damage
- Order supplies
- Maintain tools and equipment