

Strange fruit can harm apple, crabapple trees

Some junipers - including Kansas' native Eastern red cedars - are now developing what appears to be strange fruit.

The structures are actually brown, brain-shaped galls. In spring, these galls produce orange "horns," poking out in every direction.

When finished, they look like a ball of orange, almost jelly-like tendrils.

"Many people think they're part of the tree's life cycle, but they're not. They're dramatic-looking fungal structures that don't harm junipers. Instead, they produce the airborne spores of a rust disease that's best known for affecting apple and crabapple trees, typically in April and May," said Megan Kennelly, plant pathologist with Kansas State University Research and Extension.

The disease's common name -- cedar-apple rust -- reflects its two-plant life cycle, she said. Closely-related fungi that cause similar diseases are cedar-hawthorn rust and cedar-quince rust.

"This fungus is why choosing rust-resistant varieties is so important when you first buy apples, crabapples and such -- even if you select one that flowers, but doesn't produce fruit," she said. "It's also one reason why you need to prune any potential host trees you already have, to allow for good air movement through the

canopy. That the damp conditions that promote this rust disease."

Wind or rain carry the disease's fungus spores from a juniper's galls to a deciduous host tree. Upon arrival, the spores require leaf wetness to complete their task. That's why the disease tends to be more severe during wet spring weather. If they meet those conditions on a susceptible tree, in about one to three weeks its leaves will start to develop spots.

A light infection isn't likely to affect the tree's long-term health, Ms. Kennelly said. But, repeated infections, year after year, warrant attention. And, if they lead to severe defoliation that affects the tree's food-making ability, they may justify a series of preventative fungicide sprays from April through May (as long as the juniper's orange-looking galls are actively releasing spores).

"You'll need to read fungicide labels carefully to find the right product and apply it correctly," she warned. "In this case, for example, some products are safe to use on trees that flower and produce usable fruit. Others aren't -- they're just for ornamental varieties."

More information

More facts about cedar-apple rust are available at any local K-State Research and Extension office 785-332-3171



GRADY BRUNK (left) and GAVIN COOPER, participate in the FFA Judging held at Cheylin on Tuesday. Herald staff photo by Linda Schneider



GRACE LANDERS received a balloon at the health fair held recently in St. Francis. Herald staff photo by Karen Krien

Help remove trash from roads

More than 31,000 bags of trash -- that's just an average of what Adopt-A-Highway groups in Kansas remove from along roadways each year.

This number is a rough estimate by the Kansas Department of Transportation, that sponsors the program, taking the number of groups and multiplying them by an average of 15 bags of trash per clean up three times a year. But it illustrates the positive impact the Adopt-A-Highway program has in Kansas.

"Most people don't realize how much trash is along our roadways and what a serious problem littering is," said Angel Fitzgerald, the department's Adopt-A-Highway coordinator in northeast Kan-

sas. "Adopt-A-Highway groups in Kansas do an incredible job of helping keep our state clean."

Those groups' efforts have been taking place for a long time. In fact, Adopt-A-Highway is celebrating its 20th anniversary in Kansas this year.

"Take 20 years times 31,000 bags -- that's a lot of trash that is not polluting our environment, harming our wildlife or making our state unsightly," she said. "Everyone who participates in the program should be proud of their hard work."

New groups can always join the program. Groups are asked to sign a two-year agreement with the program and to clean their sections of roadway three times a year at their convenience.

Any non-profit group that does not discriminate based on race, religion or sex can adopt a section of roadway. Youth groups with members at least 11 years old are also eligible. The department provides each group safety training, trash bags, orange vests and signs for their adopted stretch of highway.

The annual Clean Up Kansas Campaign is taking place during the month of April. All Adopt-A-Highway groups are encouraged but not required to participate in the statewide event. Motorists are asked to use extra caution as people with bright orange vests will be working next to the highways.

For more information, contact the Kansas Department of Transportation office in St. Francis.

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Thanks to advanced minimally invasive surgery options at Hays Med, patients who suffer from back pain no longer face lengthy and difficult recovery periods. These advanced procedures get patients back to their normal activities quicker than ever.

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Recycling

Continued from Page 1 go beyond what they are required to do and do not complain. They also said that the recycling center, south of the museum on U.S. 36 was very clean and easy to use. People who use the center, Mr. Jensen said, are very good at separating items.

Bruce Swihart, councilman, suggested that people who have not recycled, start out by recycling just one thing, like tin cans, then go to plastics, then cereal boxes, or newspapers, or shredded paper. Before long, it is something that becomes easy to do, he said.