



Physiological Fruit Drop

Also referred to as June Drop

Understanding June Drop and How to Help Your Fruit Tree

In Ontario, it's normal for fruit trees to shed some of their developing fruit in early summer — a natural process known as June drop. This happens because the tree is self regulating and adjusting its fruit load to match its current resources, like water and nutrients, and to ensure that the remaining fruits can grow to a proper size.

Factors such as weather conditions, tree health, and the number of fruits already set on the tree can influence how many fruits are dropped during this period. While it might seem concerning at first, especially if a noticeable amount drops, it's generally a natural and beneficial process for the tree's overall health and the quality of the remaining fruits. While some fruit drop is expected and even beneficial, you can support your tree and help reduce excessive loss with these practices:

Water Consistently

- Why it helps: Inconsistent or insufficient watering is one of the biggest stressors during fruit development and can cause excess drop.
- What to do: Water deeply and consistently, especially during dry spells. A slow, deep soak once or twice a week is better than frequent shallow watering.

Fertilize Appropriately

- Why it helps: A nutrient-deficient tree may not have the energy to support a large fruit load.
- What to do: Use a balanced fertilizer designed for fruit trees (like 10-10-10 or one that matches your soil needs) in early spring. Don't overdo it — too much nitrogen can lead to lush leaves at the expense of fruit.

Thin the Fruit Manually

- Why it helps: If your tree set a heavy crop, it will shed fruit to balance the load. Thinning reduces the tree's burden and can prevent it from dropping even more.
- What to do: Remove smaller or misshapen fruits, leaving about 4–6 inches between fruits on each branch. This also helps the remaining fruit grow larger and healthier.

Check for Pests and Disease

- Why it helps: Fruit drop can be a sign of insect or fungal issues.
- What to do: Inspect dropped fruit and leaves for signs of pests or fungus. Treat with the appropriate organic or chemical method if needed.

Mulch and Maintain

- Apply mulch around the base (but not touching the trunk) to retain moisture, regulate soil temperature, and reduce stress. Late spring frosts, heavy rains, or a cool bloom period can affect pollination and early fruit development. These stress factors can worsen June drop, so consider recent weather conditions when treating.