

## The Saturday That Saved an Orchard: One Day in Lar That Broke a 30-Year Curse of Apple Scab

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Abdul Rashid Dar had stopped walking through his Orchard in the morning. "Too painful," he said. "Every leaf reminded me of failure." For three decades, his family had farmed the same five acres. But for the last five years, Apple Scab had turned each September into a funeral. Spots on the fruit. Rejection at the market. Silence at the dinner table. Then came a Saturday that changed everything. SKUAST Kashmir, conducted a **one-day training program on "Good Agricultural Practices in Orchard Management for Disease-Free Apple Cultivation"** at the Lar Farmers' Service Centre funded by MSME. **50 farmers** attended. Most came without hope. All left with a plan.



### What They Learned in Seven Hours

Session	Focus
Morning	Identifying scab and canker before they spread
Mid-day	Live pruning demonstration cutting infected branches at the right angle
Afternoon	Calibrating sprayers and preparing Bordeaux mixture

No PowerPoints. No lectures. Just hands-on work in a real orchard. The trainer, a plant pathologist from SKUAST-K, walked them to a diseased tree. He pulled out a pocket knife. "Watch," he said. He scraped the canker, exposed the fungus, then pruned with precision. "This is your surgery. Do it now, or lose everything by August." By 4 PM, every farmer had written a one-page action plan. Abdul Rashid folded his and placed it inside his wallet next to his identity card.

### The Results

**40 days later:** Abdul Rashid's orchard was clean. Not perfect he said that himself but clean enough that a trader from Srinagar can definitely offered him **22% above mandi rate**.

The numbers across all 50 farmers:

**15% reduction** in scab incidence

**20% savings** on fungicides

**Two farmer action groups** formed meeting every Sunday morning

"I used to spray 11 times a season," says Abdul Rashid. "After that one day, I sprayed only 7 times. My orchard is healthier than it has been in a decade. That one day training gave me back my mornings."

## What Lar Teaches Us

A single day if it is the right day can break a 30-year curse. Not with miracles. With pruning shears, a sprayer calibration, and the courage to change. **Today**, Abdul Rashid leads a peer group of 23 farmers. They walk each other's orchards every Sunday before prayers. "We used to compete on who had the biggest orchard," he says. "Now we compete on who has the cleanest."

