



Healthy Fruit

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Prepared by the University of Massachusetts Fruit Team

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NEFCON Research & Demonstration Field Day

This note from Glen Morin, New England Fruit Consultants: "Please join us for an informative meeting to be held at one of the best tree fruit growing sites in the region. New England Fruit Consultants in collaboration with Apex Orchards will present the results of this year's field trials with various crop protection materials, growth regulators and other products that play an important role in crop production in New England." Date: Wednesday August 14, 2002; Location: Research Farm / Apex Orchards, 153 Peckville Road, Shelburne, MA; Time: 8:30 AM - 3:00 PM. 1.5 pesticide recertification credits pending and free B-B-Q lunch. (All are welcome but we request \$10 donation per person for more than 2 persons/farm or company.)"

Summer Prune Now for Color

Jon Clements, Extension Tree Fruit Specialist, UMASS
Win Cowgill, Rutgers Cooperative Extension

From now until about one month before harvest (app. August 15) is a good time to summer prune apple varieties such as McIntosh and Cortland to improve red fruit color. 'Yellow' varieties such as Golden Delicious and Jonagold also benefit from summer pruning by developing deeper, more yellow color at harvest. Color pigments are now being accumulated in the fruit skin but waiting for cooler weather to fully express the red color characteristic of fall apples. But the fruit must be exposed to light for the pigment to be synthesized, hence the value of summer pruning NOW to remove shading in the tree canopy. Vigorous, upright, current season's shoot growth ('suckers' or 'water sprouts') are prime candidates for removal by summer pruning. Also, undesirable uprights just above fruiting clusters can be headed-back to the cluster, and upturned branches can be thinned to a weak lateral branch. Summer pruning now may also help improve the calcium content of fruit. (But is usually more effective for this purpose when done earlier, so keep that calcium foliar spray program going.) Keep in mind summer pruning can negatively impact fruit size, can result in sunburn if hot, sunny weather follows, and can result in premature fruit drop when done too close to harvest. (Less than three weeks.). On peaches, the last summer pruning on one- and two-year-old peach trees for shaping should be completed within the next week to ten days. On bearing peach trees, removing the upright vigorous sucker growth

in the center of the tree will enhance color, but must be completed two weeks prior to harvest to prevent reduction in soluble solids.

D. Greene 'Harvest the Potential Report*'- July 22

"Crop load and condition in New England are somewhat variable. Fruit set in some orchards was quite light and pockets of hail have damaged fruit in some areas. Overall we expect to harvest fewer fruit than normal. Condition of the foliage is very good and vegetative growth is somewhat vigorous. Adequate moisture and favorable temperatures have resulted in good fruit growth. Fruit size is comparable if not larger than fruit size at comparable times the past two years. Maturity of fruit seems to following historical norms so ReTain should be applied approximately 4 weeks before the anticipated normal start of harvest of varieties selected to receive ReTain. Summer pruning on McIntosh has proved to be quite beneficial. We recommend completing summer pruning before application of ReTain to improve spray penetration and coverage. Since crop load is quite light in some orchards, a full regiment of calcium chloride sprays is recommended especially in orchards or blocks where crop load is light. However, orchardists may want to suspend calcium chloride sprays during the immediate period when ReTain is applied. The surfactant used to enhance ReTain uptake may also increase calcium chloride uptake, leading to some leaf burn." *If you'd like to receive the 'Harvest the Potential Report' direct from Valent, please call 800-6-Valent (800-682-5368) or fax them at 847-968-4802.

Apple Maggot

Flies continue to trickle in and are slowly reaching the threshold in most orchards. Don't forget to clean the traps occasionally to be sure that flies are captured! Remember that fly activity often peaks in late August or early September, but also that they are relatively easy to kill (i.e., they are susceptible to presence of even small residues of insecticides).

Mites

The hot weather last week brought on some mite activity, though it is still very spotty. Spot treat where appropriate, and be sure to watch the pre-harvest interval on miticides at this point.

Leafhoppers

Adults are beginning to appear from the third generation. Watch for the buildup of these adults, which can be annoying to pickers and pick-your-own customers at harvest and can cause unsightly spotting of fruit with their excrement.

Peach Pests

A few notes on peach pests from Mike Fargione's Hudson Valley Newsletter: A grower in Marlboro, Ulster Co. recently discovered significant damage to his nectarines from a pest that we have little experience with to date. This pest is the Western flower thrips (WFT). (REMEMBER: THRIPS are like MOOSE, that is, they are always referred to in the PLURAL. There is no such thing as a THRIP, only a THRIPS., Just something to amaze your friends with at the next barbecue) The WFT was originally a West Coast problem but has now become distributed throughout the country. It is an important green house pest, and I observed damage to peach and nectarine fruit earlier this year on an extension NJ tree fruit tour. NY report they have very little experience with this pest on tree fruit and control methods are not listed in Cornell's Tree Fruit Production Guide. However, the PA Tree Fruit Production Guide indicates that adult thrips move from alternate weed or crop host to stone fruit just prior to and during

harvest. Thrips may feed on the fruit surface in protected sites, such as in the stem end, the suture, under leaves and branches, and between fruit. Feeding damage results in silver stipling or patches. Silvering injury is particularly obvious on highly colored varieties.

Lannate is one recommended control material as it is effective against this pest and has a short preharvest interval (4 days). SpinTor can be used and has a 14 day preharvest interval. An application after the first harvest may prevent subsequent losses; however, an additional application may be needed if thrips pressure is severe.

Peach Tree Borer

Peach tree borer larvae are still able to hatch and get into your stone fruit trees at this late date. I have gotten several recent calls from homeowners regarding this problem. Trunk sprays may be reapplied to stone fruit trunks at this time to control borers. Control options on cherries include Asana, Lorsban, Ambush, or Pounce. The same materials and Thiodan can be applied to peaches. Be sure the spray does not hit the fruit as this is a trunk spray only! Only 1 application of Lorsban is permitted per season. Don't forget to paint stone fruit trunks. Painting provides numerous benefits including reduced borer damage. It appears to be standard practice to our south in the larger peach growing areas I visited this year.

