RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
Cooperative Extension
New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station

Cooperative Extension of Atlantic County
6260 Old Harding Highway
Mays Landing, NJ 08330-1533

njaes.rutgers.edu/extension

609-625-0056
Fax: 609-625-3646

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THE BLUEBERRY BULLETIN

Vol. 41 Issue #4

A Weekly Update to Growers

* Visit the Blueberry Bulletin webpage at njaes.rutgers.edu/blueberry-bulletin
* The 2024 Commercial Blueberry Pest Control Recommendations for New Jersey is available on https://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/

BLUEBERRY CULTURE

Dr. Gary C. Pavlis, Ph.D., Atlantic County Agriculture Agent

Visits to numerous farms this week have shown that bloom has started and even though the percent bloom varies between 5% and 80% as of April 23rd, this should be the cue to all that the first application of fertilizer should be applied. Research has shown that application now is the most efficient use of fertilizer as the uptake by the blueberry plants is at maximum right now and will continue for the next six weeks. The blueberry plant has a very inefficient root system so research has also shown that if fertilizer applications are spread out over the next six weeks, it will result in the highest yield. The easiest method to do this of course is by the use of fertigation.

It is also not too late to adjust the pH if your fields require it. The addition of sulfur to lower the pH only happens once the soil temperature is above 55 degrees so again, now is the perfect time for application of sulfur. Soil samples taken by the IPM program have shown that most fields in Atlantic County require a lime application as the pH levels are lower than the optimum of 4.5 to 4.8. A lime application at this time is also recommended, however the increase in pH will occur more slowly than the lowering process so it is recommended to apply as soon as possible. It is important to note that a field outside the optimum pH will be less efficient in fertilizer uptake, which costs the grower money.

I have also been asked about the small brown holes growers are seeing in the blueberry blossom corolla's(see picture below). I was first shown this by Phil Marucci many years ago. Phil told me that this phenomenon is done by carpenter bees and he called them nectar robbers. These bees do not do anything for pollination but usually do not hinder pollination either. In short, nothing to worry about.

Gary C. Pavis, Ph.D.
Atlantic County Agricultural Agent

PEST MANAGEMENT

Dr. Cesar Rodriguez-Saona, Extension Specialist in Blueberry Entomology, Rutgers University
Dr. Janine Spies, IPM Agent – Fruit
Ms. Carrie Mansue, IPM Sr. Program Coordinator – Fruit

This past week, IPM scouting was conducted in Burlington County only, as Atlantic County growers are currently unable to apply insecticides due to pollinator activity.

Cranberry weevil. We observed a few lingering cranberry weevils, with an average of 1.5 weevils per bush and a high of 9.3 per bush. As flower petals become fully visible cranberry weevils will begin to move to other hosts and will no longer be a risk.

Leafroller and thrips. We also monitored for leafrollers and thrips. Leafrollers: None were found. Thrips: Activity was very low, with an average of 0.37 per bush and a high of 4 per bush.

Thrips are difficult to detect due to their small size, and the injury they cause can resemble symptoms of nutrient deficiencies or disease. To confirm that thrips are responsible for crop injury, inspect the affected plant parts directly for the presence of thrips, using a white beating tray to dislodge them for easier detection. Grower concerns typically focus on thrips injury to flowers, usually caused by flower thrips in the genus *Frankliniella*.


In New Jersey, the eastern flower thrips (*Frankliniella tritici*) is commonly found in and around farms and can feed on flowers, posing a potential threat. This species can be monitored using white sticky traps.

Observations show that after bloom, most thrips activity shifts to young foliage, where feeding can cause leaf curling. This injury is primarily caused by another species, *Scirtothrips ruthveni*. However, it is still unclear whether this foliar injury affects yield. Thrips damage to fruit is generally minimal and becomes undetectable as the berries mature.

We have collected data on thrips captures using white sticky traps and have recently developed a degree-day model to predict thrips abundance in blueberry fields. The model is available here: https://benedick.sebs.rutgers.edu/BlueberryWeather/

Scouting and Control. Thrips can be monitored using white sticky traps and beating trays. If thrips are found causing significant injury, consider using Entrust (OMRI-approved for organic production) or Delegate. Both insecticides are highly toxic to bees and should only be applied at dusk during bloom, when bees are not actively foraging. Avoid applying these products during bloom unless absolutely necessary.

Terrapin scale. Two additional Terrapin scale traps were deployed this week. No activity was observed in any of the traps, indicating that no treatment is needed at this time.

Cranberry fruitworm and cherry fruitworm. No activity was detected in cranberry fruitworm or cherry fruitworm traps in either county. As a result, no treatment is necessary at this time.

Week Ending	CBFW AC		CBFW BC		CFW AC		CFW BC	
	AVG	HIGH	AVG	HIGH	AVG	HIGH	AVG	HIGH
4/3/25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4/11/25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4/19/25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CBFW = Cranberry Fruitworm, CFW = Cherry Fruitworm; AC = Atlantic County, BC = Burlington County								

New fact sheet is available below ***FS1365***

RUTGERS New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION



Fact Sheet FS1365

Blueberry Integrated Pest Management Delivery Program

Janine Spies, Statewide Program Leader
Fruit IPM Carrie Mansue, Sr. Program Coordinator, Blueberry IPM

The Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE) Fruit Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program provides the following support to growers during the season to enhance the adoption of IPM in New Jersey blueberries.

Programs Available

On-Farm Integrated Pest Management Program

RCE staff will provide on-farm insect, weed and disease pest management services that include field scouting for the crops listed below.

Crop	Activity	Reporting	Cost per Season[1]
Blueberry	Weekly Scouting	Weekly Report	$500

[1] A seasonal base fee of $500 per farm includes scouting for two sites. An additional fee will apply if more sites are added.

Insect Trapping Program

An insect monitoring service utilizing pheromone traps is available to growers statewide. Traps are monitored once a week when scouting is performed. Insect trap counts are recorded and reported to the farmer. Data is processed for publication in the Rutgers Plant and Pest Advisory and the Blueberry Bulletin. The specific pest monitoring services are listed below for the Blueberry IPM program. Additional pests may be monitored as needed or on a trial basis.

Pest	Reporting
Cranberry Fruit Worm (CBFW)	Weekly Monitoring
Cherry Fruit Worm (CFW)	Weekly Monitoring
Oriental Beetle	Weekly Monitoring
Spotted Wing Drosophila (SWD)[1]	Weekly Monitoring
Blueberry Maggot (BM)[1]	Weekly Monitoring

Sharp-nose Leafhopper (SNLH)[1]	Weekly Monitoring

[1] SWD, BM, and SNLH traps are included in the seasonal base fee. More traps can be included for an additional fee.

Additional Program Services

Service	Frequency	Cost per Season
Salt Testing for SWD	Weekly During Harvest	$5.00/site
Anthracnose Testing	By growers' preference	$5.00/site
Leaf Samples	Once; Mid-July thru August	Lab price at season
Soil Samples	Once; September thru October	Lab price at season
Nematode Sampling	Once; September thru October	Lab price at season
Plant Diagnostic Laboratory Services	By growers' preference	Lab price at season

Recommendations

Recommendations are provided directly by the RCE Fruit Integrated Pest Management staff. Additional recommendations and information can be found in the following publications:

- Commercial Blueberry Pest Control
- Recommendation Guide RCE Plant & Pest Advisory Fruit Crops Edition
- Blueberry Bulletin

To find out more about the Blueberry IPM programs available from Rutgers Cooperative Extension or to enroll in the program, contact:

Carrie Mansue
Sr. Program Coordinator Cooperative Extension of Atlantic County
6260 Old Harding Highway Mays Landing, NJ 08330-1533 Phone: 609-313-2406
Email: cmansue@njaes.rutgers.edu

Submit programmatic needs by scanning the QR code below:

Blueberry Integrated
Management Delivery Program

April 2025

For more information: njaes.rutgers.edu.

Cooperating Agencies: Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Boards of County Commissioners. Rutgers Cooperative Extension, a unit of the Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, is an equal opportunity program provider and employer.

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