RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
Cooperative Extension
New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station

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

extension.rutgers.edu
609-625-0056
Fax: 609-625-3646

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# THE BLUEBERRY BULLETIN

## *A Weekly Update to Growers*

Visit the Blueberry Bulletin webpage: [extension.rutgers.edu/blueberry-bulletin](extension.rutgers.edu/blueberry-bulletin)
2024 Commercial Blueberry Pest Control Recommendations for New Jersey: [njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs](njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs)

## Blueberry Culture

***Dr. Gary C. Pavlis, Atlantic County Agricultural Agent***

As we begin the new season, I hope you had a healthy and safe winter. The Blueberry Open House had to be rescheduled to March 26th. You will be getting registration information shortly.

As always, if you have a problem during the season do not hesitate to call me 609-625-0056. Any suggestions, constructive criticism about the Blueberry Bulletin newsletter would be greatly appreciated.

Lastly, if your soil tests came back with a pH below or above the optimum range for highbush blueberries which is 4.5 to 5.0, right now is an excellent time to apply lime if the pH is too low or sulfur if the pH is too high.

Here's hoping for a very successful 2026 season.

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

# Plant Pathology

Managing Anthracnose for 2026

*By Peter V. Oudemans, Ph.D.*
*Professor and Extension Specialist, Plant Pathology*

This season we face several significant challenges for anthracnose management. First, the reduced availability of **Ziram** will require growers to substitute fungicides that may not provide the same level of protection. Second, the emergence of a **new anthracnose species** will require some adjustments to our spray programs.

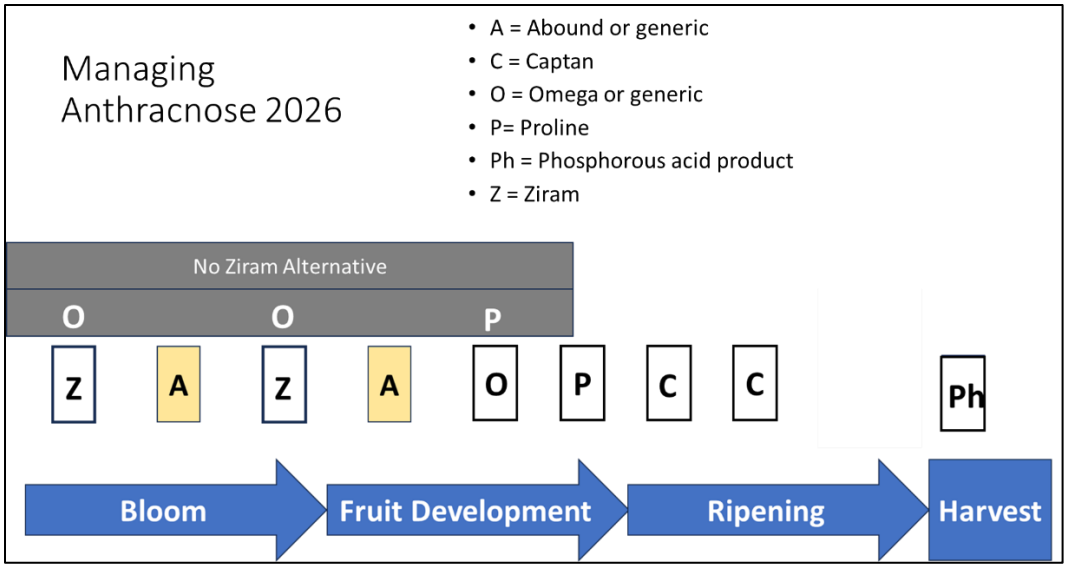
Figure 1 outlines a **general seasonal approach** to anthracnose management in the absence of Ziram. During **bloom and early fruit development**, **Omega (or generic formulations)** can be used as an alternative protectant. However, growers should keep in mind that Omega has a **shorter residual activity than Ziram**, so maintaining appropriate spray intervals will be important.

During **fruit development**, **Captan** can also be incorporated as a protectant fungicide. Like Omega, Captan has a **shorter half-life than Ziram**, so coverage and timing become particularly important.
As fruit approach **ripening**, **Proline** becomes an important tool. It is one of the few **FRAC 3 fungicides with strong activity against anthracnose**, and therefore plays an important role in maintaining disease control later in the season.

Finally, **phosphorous acid products** can be useful toward the **beginning of harvest**, where they help suppress anthracnose while fitting well within harvest management programs.
While **Captan does provide good control of anthracnose**, it has characteristics that warrant caution. Captan is a broad-spectrum biocide that is toxic to any cell it enters. Its selectivity depends largely on differential uptake: fungal cells readily absorb Captan, whereas plant cells typically do not. However, certain additives — particularly some insecticides and surfactants — can increase uptake into plant tissues, which may result in **phytotoxicity**. In addition, some surfactants alone have been shown to cause injury in blueberries (see: https://doi.org/10.17660/ActaHortic.2002.574.12).

For this reason, growers should be aware of the potential risk of phytotoxicity when using Captan, particularly when tank-mixing with other products. Captan remains an **effective fungicide with a low risk for resistance development and a broad spectrum of activity**, and it can be a useful tool for disease management. However, because we have observed injury under certain conditions, it is generally **not my first choice when suitable alternatives are available**.

Given changing regulations and the loss or restriction of several fungicides, **Captan is once again becoming a viable option**, and we expect its use to increase in New Jersey this season.

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