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THE BLUEBERRY BULLETIN

A Weekly Update to Growers

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

Save the Date: Blueberry Twilight Meeting, Thursday, May 14th, Marucci Research Center 6pm

Blueberry Culture

Dr. Gary C. Pavlis, Atlantic County Agricultural Agent

I have been surveying blueberry fields throughout Atlantic and Burlington Counties as a result of the freeze. Initial predictions of damage were very bad. However, even though there is no accurate method for determining the exact amount of crop loss at this time, the fields that I have visited show a very good amount of fruit set. A more accurate determination of set will be available at the end of the month but the initial estimate of 50% crop loss I now believe to be much too high.

Given that, I must stress that normal recommended operations, fertilizer, insect control, disease control, should still be maintained. I think the only area that a cut may be made is in labor. If crop loss works out to be 20-30%, then labor could possibly be cut by that amount.

Lastly, just a reminder, June 1 is traditionally when the last application of NPK is applied.

Gary C. Parks, 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

Beating Tray and Fruit Monitoring

Scouting activities were conducted last week across 139 commercial blueberry fields in Burlington and Atlantic Counties. Field evaluations focused on monitoring pest activity and crop development, including assessments for leafrollers, spongy moth, plum curculio, and thrips using beating tray samples, as well as fruit inspections for pest injury and developmental progress. All target pests, except spongy moth, were detected during scouting activities (Table 1).

A slight increase in leafroller and plum curculio activity was observed in beating tray samples compared to previous scouting periods. In addition, monitoring of developing fruit revealed feeding and/or oviposition injury associated with these pests (Table 2).

Table 1. Beating Tray Data

	Leafrollers		Spongy Moth		Plum Curculio		Thrips	
	Avg	High	Avg	High	Avg	High	Avg	High
4/17	0.0649	2	0.0001	0.1	0.0686	2.5	0.5547	9
4/25	0.0801	0.8	0.0001	0.1	0.1156	3	1.0383	26
5/1	0.1	0.8	0.0007	0.1	0.15	3	2.38	39
5/9	0.08	0.7	0	0	0.245	4.5	1.89	37

Table 2. Fruit Monitoring Data

	% Leafroller Berry Infestation		% Plum Curculio Berry Infestation	
	Avg	High	Avg	High
5/9	0.125	1	0.235	2.6

Trap Monitoring

Scale traps targeting Putnam and terrapin scale were deployed last week. Data will be collected moving forward to monitor first-generation crawler emergence and to assist in optimizing treatment timing.

Cranberry and cherry fruitworm traps were checked last week. No cranberry fruitworm activity was detected; however, cherry fruitworm activity increased, indicating that adults are in flight and mating (Table 3).

Table 3. Trap Data

	Cranberry Fruitworm (AC)		Cherry Fruitworm (AC)		Cranberry Fruitworm (BC)		Cherry Fruitworm (BC)	
	Avg	High	Avg	High	Avg	High	Avg	High
5/1	0	0	2.5	5	0	0	3.5	7
5/9	0	0	4.4	6	0	0	6.25	10
AC: Atlantic County, BC: Burlington County								

Weeds

Weed Monitoring

This past week, the IPM team monitored emerging weed populations within blueberry fields. Most of the weed pressure observed consisted of marestail and red sorrel, although some fields also showed low levels of nutsedge and goldenrod.

Now is the time to begin considering which herbicides to apply before harvest begins.
For reference, consult the Rutgers Commercial Blueberry Guide:

https://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/publication.php?pid=e265