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# THE BLUEBERRY BULLETIN

## *A Weekly Update to Growers*



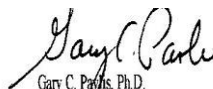
Visit the Blueberry Bulletin webpage: [extension.rutgers.edu/blueberry-bulletin](https://extension.rutgers.edu/blueberry-bulletin)  
2024 Commercial Blueberry Pest Control Recommendations for New Jersey:  
[njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs](https://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs)

## Blueberry Culture

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

**Yellow Leaves:** Numerous fields in the Hammonton area showed yellow leaves on the new growth. This has occurred almost entirely on 'Duke'. Yellow leaves at this time of year are normal because the plant is growing so fast that it causes Nitrogen deficiency in the new growth. When growth slows during fruit maturation, the problem will fix itself. This is not the problem I am seeing this week. These leaves are light green/yellow, but the veins are green. They are found only on the new growth. This is definitely iron deficiency. Years ago, I would always say that this meant the pH climbed up past 5.5. For most varieties this is true, but for 'Duke', it may not be true.

It appears that the iron requirement for 'Duke' is higher than 'Bluecrop' and 'Elliott'. As a result, it is possible to get iron deficiency when the pH is in the optimum range of 4.5 to 4.8. If you see this problem, it is critical to fix it now. A simple foliar application of an iron chelate will green these plants up in a few days. If left unchecked, growth will decrease and next year's flower bud development will also decrease. This will have an effect on next year's yield.

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



# Pest Management

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## Insects

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 of 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 were detected during scouting activities (Table 1).

**Plum curculio** adult numbers on bushes decreased over the past week, although some adults are still present. The average count was 0.117 adults per bush, with a high of 3.5 adults per bush.

**Thrips** numbers increased compared to previous weeks. The primary concern is the potential for thrips injury to flowers and developing fruit. After bloom, thrips may feed on young blueberry foliage, causing leaf curling; however, the risk of injury to developing leaves and fruit is low at this time.

In addition, monitoring of developing fruit indicated increasing feeding and/or oviposition activity by these pests (Table 2).

Table 1. Beating Tray Sampling 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
5/16	0.04	0.7	0.0007	0.1	0.117	3.5	5.02	99

Table 2. Fruit Sampling Data

	% Leafroller Berry Infestation		% Plum Curculio Berry Infestation	
	Avg	High	Avg	High
5/9	0.125	1	0.235	2.6
5/16	0.22	1.5	0.67	6.5



## Trap Monitoring

Scale traps targeting Putnam and terrapin scale were monitored last week and captured very low numbers; therefore, no treatment is recommended at this time.

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

Table 3. Trap Sampling 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
5/16	0	0	7.7	11	0	0	9	15

AC: Atlantic County, BC: Burlington County

## Post-Pollination Insecticide Options

Growers who wish to use selective insecticides, especially for the control of lepidopteran pests, are encouraged to do so. These compounds are generally safer to humans and the environment. Intrepid is an insect growth regulator (IGR) active only against caterpillars and has no or minimal effects on other insects. Esteem is also an IGR and is effective against cranberry fruitworm and scale insects (when applied at the appropriate timing). Delegate (or Entrust for organic growers) is an insecticide with activity against caterpillars. Assail is a neonicotinoid insecticide active against cranberry fruitworm and aphids. Altacor, Exirel, and Verdepryn belong to a newer class of insecticides (diamides) and are highly effective against caterpillars.

Below are some guidelines to consider when choosing insecticides for the first post-bloom application:

1. If cranberry fruitworm or cherry fruitworm is your only concern, you may use Intrepid, Esteem, Delegate, Altacor, Exirel, Verdepryn, or Assail.
2. If cranberry fruitworm, cherry fruitworm, and plum curculio are your primary concerns, you may use Avaunt Evo.
3. If aphids are your primary concern, and caterpillar pressure or plum curculio activity is low at this time, then use Assail, imidacloprid (e.g., Admire Pro), Actara, Sivanto, or Movento. Assail will also control cranberry fruitworm. The neonicotinoids Assail, imidacloprid, and Actara are systemic and highly effective against sucking insects. Alternatively, you may use a broad-spectrum insecticide such as Diazinon or Lannate, which will also control caterpillars and other pests.
4. If you want to use a broad-spectrum insecticide in late May or early June for control of caterpillars, aphids, leafhoppers, thrips, plum curculio, and other pests, choose one of the following: Imidan, Diazinon, Lannate, or a pyrethroid (e.g., Danitol). Imidan will control most pests targeted during this



period but will not control aphids. Pyrethroids can also be used; however, they are generally weak against aphids, although they control most other pests (see labels for details). While pyrethroids will control plum curculio, higher rates may be needed for adequate control. Pyrethroid insecticides are highly toxic to natural enemies and may disrupt biological control, particularly populations of aphid predators and parasitoids.

5. Lannate is not labeled for use in Canada. Although it has the same fruit tolerance as in the United States, its use should be minimized or avoided if berries are intended for export.
6. Organic growers may consider using Venerate and PyGanic for cranberry fruitworm and plum curculio control.
7. Remember that a good pest management practice is to rotate insecticides with different modes of action. Therefore, consider using a different class of insecticide from the one used in the previous year.

## **Weeds**

This past week, the IPM team monitored weed populations during field scouting activities. Compared with marehail and red sorrel, there has been an increase in goldenrod and nutsedge populations. Now is a good time to begin planning herbicide applications before the harvest season. For additional information, please refer to the Rutgers Commercial Blueberry Guide:

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