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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

Blueberry Culture

Dr. Gary C. Pavlis, Atlantic County Agricultural Agent

Travels to many blueberry farms this week have shown that the freeze damage is very apparent. I believe the total crop was decrease by 30% to 50% in many fields. This will probably result in only 2 pickings in those fields. Growers will need less labor as a result. Blueberry plants should still be fertilized as usual. As I mentioned in past newsletters, fertilizing now actually is setting up the plant's nutrition for fruit bud initiation this Fall and growth next year. Last applications of Nitrogen should be applied in June and no later than July 1. Any micro-nutrient deficiencies can be alleviated any time.

Gary C. Pavlis, 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
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Insects

Scouting activities were conducted last week across 187 commercial and organic blueberry fields in Burlington and Atlantic Counties. Field evaluations focused primarily on inspecting fruit for pest injury and monitoring aphid infestations on new shoot terminals.

Monitoring of developing fruit indicated a decrease in feeding and/or oviposition activity by key pests (Table 1), most likely as a result of recent insecticide applications. Aphid activity has increased since last week; however, colony sizes remain small, averaging 1–5 aphids per shoot (Table 2). For fields with aphid infestations exceeding the treatment threshold, management options include Assail, Sivanto, and Movento. When applied for aphid control, these insecticides also provide suppression of scale insects. Assail has a 1-day pre-harvest interval (PHI), whereas Sivanto and Movento have a 7-day PHI.

Table 1. Fruit Monitoring 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
5/23	0.04	0.9	0.125	5.8
5/29	0.03	0.8	0.01	0.6

Table 2. Aphid Infestation on New Terminals

	% Aphid Infestation of New Terminals	
	Avg	High
5/23	1.5 A	14
5/29	2.83 A	38
Aphid Colony Size: A: 1-5, B: 6-10, C: 11-15, D: >16		

Trap Monitoring

Cranberry fruitworm and cherry fruitworm traps were checked last week, and activity declined for both species (Table 3).

Table 3. Cranberry Fruitworm/Cherry Fruitworm 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
5/16	0	0	7.7	11	0	0	9	15
5/23	0.14	1	5.14	15	0.25	1	16	29
5/29	0.14	1	1	3	0	0	1.5	6
AC: Atlantic County, BC: Burlington County								

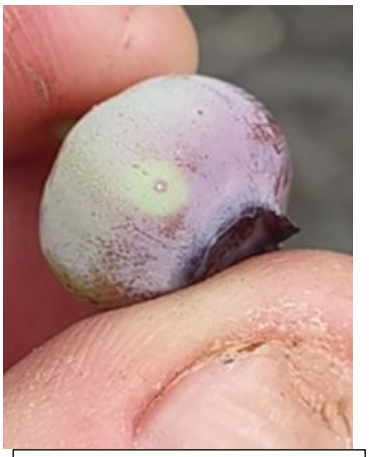
Scales

Scale traps have been checked, and crawler activity is increasing in both Terrapin and Putnam traps (Table 4). If scale was observed on sorting lines last year, this would be an appropriate time to consider management options.

Table 4. Scale Traps

	Putnam		Terrapin	
	Avg	High	Avg	High
5/23	36.85	230	1.8	8
5/29	65.17	352	21.2	41

Life history. Scales feed on plant sap, reducing plant vigor and fruit yield. Adult scales are protected by a waxy covering and are commonly found on older canes beneath loose bark. In New Jersey, Putnam scale has two generations per year. It overwinters as second-instar nymphs under loose bark, with spring activity beginning in early February. Eggs from the first generation are laid in late April, and immature crawlers appear in mid-May, peaking in late May to early June (this time of year). A second peak in crawler emergence occurs in early to mid-August.



Picture 1. Fruit injury caused by scale.

Monitoring and Management. For scale management, target the second generation of crawlers with post-harvest applications of diazinon or pyriproxyfen (Esteem). Monitor crawler activity by wrapping black electrician's tape covered with double-sided sticky tape around canes. Use a hand lens to detect crawlers on the tape. Insecticide applications should be timed to coincide with crawler emergence. Note: do not apply Esteem within 7 days of harvest.

Traps have been placed for spotted-wing drosophila, blueberry maggot, and Oriental beetle. We will provide data in next week's bulletin.

Weeds

The IPM team is continuing to monitor weed populations. Recent observations include emergence of crabgrass, red sorrel, and marestail.

For reference, consult the Rutgers Commercial Blueberry Guide:

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

However, growers should pay close attention to harvest timing. The Rutgers Degree-Day calendar is predicting that harvest will occur around June 9. As a result, it is important to consider pre-harvest intervals (PHIs) when planning any herbicide applications approaching harvest.