

Orchard Outlook Newsletter

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The technical information contained in this Orchard Outlook publication is the result of the combined professional opinions of employees of AFHRC and ADI.

Orchard Outlook Newsletter

Please note that this will be the last weekly issue of the Orchard Outlook for the 2002 growing season. The Orchard Outlook will be published periodically for the remainder of the year.

NSFGA Summer Orchard Tour

The NSFGA Summer Orchard Tour will take place this coming Tuesday, Aug. 6th. The tour will start from Scotian Gold Co-op office and packing plant on Lovett Road, Coldbrook. Coffee and cake will be available from 8:30 to 9:00 am with the bus being loaded at 9:00 am. You may wish to bring a lawn chair for after the tour and barbeque.

Apple Scab and Mildew

Most growers should not have to apply fungicides during the month of August for apple scab or mildew. The only reason to continue with regular fungicide applications would be situations where scab is very easy to find on the foliage and/or fruit. In mature orchard blocks terminal buds should have set thus there is very little or no new soft tissue, which is susceptible to mildew infections. There would be no benefit in applying fungicide for mildew control at this time of year. Make note of orchard blocks where mildew was a problem this year so that appropriate steps can be taken next year.

Codling Moth

Flights of the first generation should now be over, however growers are encouraged to monitor their traps for signs of a second generation. Clean your traps and monitor on a regular basis in the later part of August. Growers may be challenged when it comes to treating for a second generation because of crop load restricting mobility within the orchard.

Apple Maggot

Continue to monitor traps and treat according to trap captures. Expect emergence of maggot flies after rainfall, which softens the ground.

European Red Mite

AAFC reported that they have observed upwards of 60 % egg hatch of red mite in blocks they are monitoring. This is the time to determine if a Pyramite treatment is required. Matricide treatments in late August once the foliage is bronzed are not cost effective.

Tissue and Soil Analysis

This is the time of year to collect soil and leaf tissue for analysis. Next year's fertilizer applications should be based on this analysis. Refer to the July 17 issue for instructions on sampling.

Summer Pruning

Summer pruning can be used to improve fruit quality and control tree vigour when required, but it should not be used as a substitute for dormant pruning. Summer pruning should be used to complement dormant pruning. In the text *Training and Pruning Apple and Pear Trees*, by C. G. Forshey, D. C. Elfving and Robert L. Stebbins, it states that there are three objectives for which summer pruning can be used as a cultural practice in apple and pear trees. If none of these reasons applies in a particular situation, summer pruning should not be used. The first objective is to improve fruit colour and quality. Removing strong upright shoot growth will open the tree to better light penetration and expose fruit to light thus increasing color development. Concentrate on the shoulders of the tree to improve light penetration into the lower canopy. Make the majority of pruning cuts into one year old wood, heading back to a weak side lateral. In some situations a limited number of cuts can be made into two and three year old wood. Concentrate on the strong upright shoots leaving weaker shoots for future fruit spur development and as a source of carbohydrate production. Removing the strong upright shoots may also help to improve fruit quality by improving fruit calcium content. Calcium can leave the fruit going to terminal shoot growth thus shoot removal can reduce the removal of calcium from the fruit. Growers will need to monitor the fruit coming from summer pruned blocks to determine if pruning is having the desired benefits without generating the undesirable side effects of reduced fruit size, soluble solids and yield.

The second objective is to regulate growth and vigour. Summer pruning to control vigour may require the removal of enough shoot growth that fruit size, quality, flowering and hardiness may be adversely affected. In most cases summer pruning is used to alleviate a crowding problem where growing shoots and/or limbs are removed to improve light distribution throughout the tree. Removing these limbs in the summer should not stimulate vegetative growth, which would occur from a dormant removal. Summer pruning can also be used to train vigorously growing young trees but should be avoid on trees with weak to moderate vigour.

The third objective is to reduce pest and disease problems. In areas where fire blight is a problem removal of vigorous shoots, particularly water sprouts, may help to reduce the incidence of fire blight infection. Woolly apple aphid can infest water sprouts and spread into the canopy. Removal of water sprouts can help to control this pest. Woolly aphid and fire blight are not major pest problems in Nova Scotia thus this objective is not as critical as that of improving fruit quality.

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