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New Format

This is the first issue of the orchard Outlook that is being written and distributed by AgraPoint. For the past six years the newsletter has been written by AgraPoint with NSFGA looking after distribution. In 2001 when AgraPoint was formed the NSFGA was successful in stating the importance of this newsletter and were willing to look after the distribution if AgraPoint would continue to write it. With technological advances, Orchard Outlook can now be distributed by e-mail and with changes taking place within the industry, AgraPoint agreed to continue to publish the newsletter as well as make it available on our web site and send electronically to those growers who request this service. The intent is to have the OO available by late Wednesday afternoon or early Thursday morning. Like all new initiatives I am sure there will be some bugs at the start of the year in terms of e-mail lists and getting posted on time. We will do our best and ask for your patience for the first couple of weeks. I would also like to thank Helen and Carolyn for editing the OO and getting it out in the mail on a timely fashion over the past six years. I am sure I provided them with a few laughs.

Orchard Outlook Meetings

Today was the first of the 2007 Orchard Outlook Meetings. These meetings are held at the Kentville Agricultural Centre and will continue on a weekly basis until the third week of July. The meetings are held to obtain current information on disease, insect and horticultural issues that growers may need to address in the upcoming week. AAFC research and technical Staff, retired AAFC and industry representatives attend and provide input to the one hour meeting. It was a pleasure to see many familiar faces at this mornings meeting.

Weather Summary for Kentville

The month of April was cooler than normal which should come as no surprise to most people. The mean temperature for the month was 4.0°C which compares to last year's mean of 6.2°C and the 46 year average of 4.6°C. The monthly total for 5° growing days was 35.5 compared to 51.1 in 2006 and 39.2 for the 46 year average. Precipitation was only slightly higher at 91.1 mm compared to 86.7 mm in 2006 and 83.4 mm for the 46 year average.

Fruit Bud Development

Since the warm spell of weather early last week, fruit bud development has been very gradual to almost on hold. Tissue development is not very rapid with single digit highs and near freezing lows taking place the past number of days. On May 1st, apple buds were just at green tip - green tissue visible at the tip of the bud. There may be some cultivars and areas of the valley where some buds are at quarter inch green but as an overall, average apples are at green tip. Pear buds were at the swollen bud to early bud burst stage, cherries were also at swollen bud to bud burst as well as that of plum. From what I have seen and heard to date there appears to be a very good fruit bud on apples which is a reflection of last year's lighter crop. I noted in one plum orchard there appeared to be a light bloom on the Japanese cultivars.

Growers should all be aware; with warm to above average temperatures bud development can be very rapid and trees can go from being behind in bud development to being advance of normal, in a matter of days.

Apple Scab

Since last Friday we have had periods of rain, drizzle and fog which has varied throughout the Valley and as a result apple scab infection periods will also have varied. At the Kentville Agricultural Centre two apple scab infection periods have been recorded since the appearance of green tip. The first was a 20 hour infection period beginning around 6 pm on Friday April 27th lasting until about 3 pm on Saturday. At an average temperature of 7.8° C this was classed as a light infection. The second infection period began around 5:30pm on Sunday and ran for 44hrs until mid afternoon of Tuesday May 1st. The average temperature was 7.5° C placing this as a heavy infection period. Ascospores were released during these wetting periods and if they landed on green tissue that was not protected, infections would have taken place. To date the percentage of spores that have matured would be less than 5%.

The risk of apple scab infection at the beginning of the season can be quite low in orchard block that had no infections during the 2006 growing season. At this point in the growing season there is very little tissue for a spore to land on and with low spore numbers the risk of this occurring is minimal. After saying this, how growers manage their apple scab programs at the start can have a great impact on the number of sprays that have to be applied and the cost and types of fungicide that are applied. That early fungicide at the beginning of the season can be like an insurance program in that you may not need it, but you are protected if something were to go wrong. Controlling scab from the beginning of the season will reduce spore load pressure in the orchard and may prevent you from having to use some of the more expensive fungicides at eradicated rates and applying extra sprays at the tail end of the season. That first spray also insures that your sprayer is working right for those critical spray periods.

Choice of fungicide at this stage in the growing season is often based upon the need to apply an oil treatment for European red mite and the amount of leaf tissue present. If oil is to be applied then growers should avoid the use of Captan or Maestro within 14 days of the oil treatment. At this point in the growing season it may be 7 days or 14 days before the oil is applied. Polyram, Diathane, Manzate Penncozed and Dikar are compatible with oil. These fungicides are the older products on the market,

having broad spectrum activity with kickback periods of 18-48 hours depending on temperature (48 hr at 6°C and 18 at 17°C). The use of the SI fungicides Nova and Nustar and the stoblin fungicides Sovran and Flint have a 96 hr kick back activity, although are questionable with the amount of tissue showing. These products should be saved until tight cluster and later. New products that are options are Scala and Vanguard which have broad spectrum activity in controlling scab with kickback periods of up to 72 hrs for Scala and 48 hrs for Vanguard. Both of are pre bloom products which are compatible with oil.

For those growers that have an organic block, the interval between oil and sulphur should be 30 days.

Fire Blight

There is still a short window of opportunity to apply copper to assist with the control of fire blight. Copper is phototoxic to the bacterial spores and coating the surface of the tree with copper can reduce the amount of fire blight spores during the bloom period. There is a risk of fruit russetting when it is applied closer to bloom, however, this risk should be minimal when it is applied prior to ½ inch green in a normal growing season (regular rain fall).

Insect Development

There are very few insects that growers need to be concerned about now, however this will quickly change as bud development goes from green tip to bud separation to calyx. The two main insects that are of concern are European red mite and pear psylla. In the case of pear psylla oil treatments should have already been applied to discourage egg laying. An application of oil to pears now would still be of some benefit but there is a good chance an insecticide treatment would be required later in the growing season. Given the cost of oil a calyx insecticide treatment may be a more viable option. Oil treatment for European red mite should be timed between 1/2 inch green and tight cluster stage of apple bud development. This treatment should be based upon assessment of viable over winter egg numbers. Oil can also be used as a treatment for European red mite on pears and peaches. When using oil it should not be applied when temperatures are near freezing or following a frost. The longer you can delay the oil application following a frost the less likelihood of additional damage to the leaf tissue. Also Captan and Maestro are not compatible oil and try to following a 14 days separation between and oil application and Captan or Maestro.

2007/2008 Spray Guides

Hard copies of the 2007/2008 Apple and Pear Management Guide are available from the NSFGA as well as from the AgraPoints website http://www.agrapoint.ca/publications/Orchard_Schedule_v2007.pdf.

The stone fruit guide is also available from our website

http://www.agrapoint.ca/publications/StoneFruit_Guide_v2007.pdf.

There were not a lot of changes made to the apple and pear guide. The additions for disease control were: Scala was added as a prebloom treatment for apple scab and Streptomycin, BlightBan and Bloomtime for fire blight. Additions for insect control were: Rimon for codling moth; calypso for codling moth, plum curculio, apple maggot, mullein bug leafhopper and spotted tentiform leafminer and Actara

for rosy apple aphid, mullein bug, leafhopper, spotted tentiform leafminer and pear psylla. Although Primor was left in, there is very little or no product for sale. The only addition under miticides was Envidor. Some of these new products were available for use in 2007 but were not in the pesticide guide.

Honeycrisp™ Planting

Those growers that will be receiving assistance for 2007 Honeycrisp™ under the HOCORP will need to contact Bill Craig (678-7722) once the trees have been planted and the support system installed, if required, so that inspections and tree counts can take place. Once the tree counts and mapping have been completed, the HOCORP committee will review the inspection information prior to payment being made.

Horticultural Notes

Tree Planting

Those growers that will be planting fruit trees should try to get them into the ground as soon as possible. Having said this, they should be planted in soil conditions that do not have standing water. Do not plant them in mucky soil conditions which will have a negative impact on tree growth. It would be better to wait a few days for the soil to dry out and keep the trees in a cool place so that buds do not start to break.

Weed Control

Generally, it is easier to control weeds as they just begin to grow, rather than mature weeds. Residual herbicides also need to be applied prior to weed germination of while the weeds are very young. It is not too early to start thinking about herbicide applications.

Mouse Guards

Mouse guards should be moved each spring to allow the tree trunks to dry during wet periods. Removal of the guards will allow you to head off potential problems with canker and round headed borer.

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