

Volume 10, No. 01**March 19, 2010****This issue contains:**

- **Fruit Sweet Cherry Pruning Workshop**
- **Weather**
- **Peach Leaf Curl**
- **Pear Psylla**
- **Plum Pockets**
- **Orchard Management Schedule**

Cherry Pruning Workshop Friday March 26, 2010

AgraPoint will be host a sweet cherry pruning workshop on Friday morning March 26th. Greg Norton a British Columbia cherry grower will be on hand to lead the discussion and comment on how sweet cherries are pruned based upon cultivar. Greg is a prominent cherry grower and will have some good ideas on how we might be able to prune and train sweet cherry trees under our growing conditions. The workshop will get underway at 8:30 am at Noggins Corner new sweet cherry orchard located in Lower Canard. The second stop will be at Blake Sarsfield's new cherry planting located on the North Medford road just across for their high bush blueberry planting. The last stop will be at Rob Peill's new plantings in Starrs Point.

Weather

The topic of conversation these days is about the mild winter that has occurred and the warm temperatures to date for the month of March. On the 18th of March 2009 there was still 21.4 cm of snow on the ground at the Atlantic Food and Horticultural Research Centre in Kentville compared to none this year. Temperatures to date have been above average for the month of March. The mean temperature for March 1 to 17 is 0.9°C which compare to -3.02°C for the same time period in 2009. Precipitation total for this interval is 4.6 mm compared to 62.6 mm in 2009. Needless to say unless we have terrible weather during the month of April there will be an early start of plant growth. Yes you will most like have to apply one or more sprays during the month of April.

Peach Leaf Curl

Fungicide application to control peach leaf curl this year should be applied in late March to early April. The mild weather during March should advance bud development thus the need for earlier fungicide applications. If left untreated peach leaf curl can cause severe early defoliation and crop loss of peaches. The disease overwinters as blastospores in protected crevices in the bark and around the buds. Primary infections are the most damaging and occur during the early spring from bud swell, when bud scales loosen, until the first young leaves are fully emerged from the bud. Infected leaves are severely deformed and often display a variety of colours ranging from light green and yellow to shades of red and purple. The leaves become wrinkled, puckered and curled. Infected fruit may drop early and go unnoticed while others may become crooked at the stem end like a small yellow squash, and some may develop

reddish to purple wart-like deformities on the fruit surface. Control of this disease can be obtained by one well-timed spray, either in the fall after 90% leaf fall, or in the spring before bud swell. For commercial orchard plantings Bravo or Ferbam are recommended. Bravo has proven to be quite effective for peach leaf curl when applied at the correct time. The recommended rate of Bravo 500 is 7.0 litres per hectare while that of Ferbam is 6.75 kg per hectare.

Plum Pockets

Plum pockets, not to be confused with the virus plum pox, is a fungal disease that infects plums. Like peach leaf curl plum pockets infections take place early in the spring when the buds swell and the bud scales separate. In most years a fungicide spray application in early to mid April would control this disease however with the present weather conditions it would be advisable to apply the treatments in late March to early April. In NS plum pockets is more commonly observed on the Japanese-type plums. Infected fruit buds will produce abnormally large misshapen, bladder-like fruit with thick, spongy flesh. The center of infected fruit is hollow due to the failure of the young seed to develop. The best way to describe the fruit is that it looks like a large pea pod. For commercial plum plantings the fungicide Thiram 75 WP applied at a rate of 6.73 kg per hectare should control this disease. If only a couple of trees need to be treated lime sulphur may be a more economical solution than having to buy a bag of Thiram.

Pear Psylla

As with the need to apply fungicides earlier than normal for peach leaf curl and plum pockets the same would hold true for the application of oil to control pear psylla. I have heard that some adult psylla have been observed but to date no eggs have been observed. Female pear psylla begin to lay eggs prior to bud breaks on warm (10°C +) sunny days in April with egg laying continuing into May. Egg laying in all likely hood will begin earlier than last year and therefore growers should be prepared to apply dormant oil sprays 7 to 10 earlier than last year.

Orchard Management Schedule

The orchard management scheduled was revised in 2009 and published to cover the 2009/2010 growing seasons. A hard copy will not be published this year. I have however updated the electronic format of the guide which will be available in the very near future the AgraPoint web site:

http://www.extensioncentral.com/eng/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&gid=113&Itemid=32. There have not been a lot of changes to the guide. The main two are the addition of Pristine for apple, pear scab, powdery mildew and secondary summer diseases and Clutch for, aphids, leafhopper, plum curculio and pear psylla. Dr Mike Hardman also provide me with some updates on the toxicity of certain pesticide to the mite predator Typhs.

*Editor: Bill Craig
AgraPoint*