

PLANT & PEST ADVISORY

FRUIT EDITION \$1.50

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North Jersey Tree Fruit Maturity Update

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Apple harvest is in full swing in Northern New Jersey with many different cultivars maturing in the next two weeks. We will continue to monitor the progress of apple maturity on a weekly basis so we can aid growers in determining the optimum time to harvest their different cultivars.

Gala and Marshall Mac harvest for the fresh market should be wrapping up in North Jersey. Although many blocks of Gala have passed their peak for the fresh market, those blocks treated with ReTain are still holding strong on the tree and are still in perfect fresh market condition at the Snyder Farm, Hunterdon County.

Red Delicious

Older strains of Red Delicious such as RedChief have developed a good blush, but are still a week or so away from harvest for immediate fresh market sales. At the Snyder Farm we are observing slight variability between strains of Red Delicious. Growers must be aware of their particular strain and harvest accordingly. With the warm days that have occurred over the last week and a half, some strains in the Hunterdon County area have jumped a point or more on the Starch Index (SI) chart. It is recommended that growers harvest Reds for long term storage with SI readings between 2.8 and 3.5. We like to see sugar (BRIX) readings of 10 or greater before Reds hit the fresh market counter.

	<u>Pressure</u>	<u>Brix</u>	<u>Starch</u>	<u>Cultivar</u>
Hunterdon:	20.9	8.6%	3.5	RedChief
Hunterdon: (Snyder)	18.6	8.6%	3.8	SuperChief

Empire

Empire maturity is slowly advancing. Maturity between blocks is variable as fresh market harvest appears to be between a week to two weeks off in the Pittstown area. Optimum harvest maturity for storage is between 4.5 - 5.5 on the SI.

	<u>Pressure</u>	<u>Brix</u>	<u>Starch</u>
Hunterdon: (Snyder)	22.4	10.3%	3.8
Hunterdon:	23.2	10.8%	4.5

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Macoun

Harvest tests conducted on Macoun over the past couple of weeks from a Hunterdon County orchard site indicate that Macoun maturity is advancing slowly, and harvest is still 1-2 weeks off for fresh market. Macoun should be harvested for long term storage at around 5 on the SI chart. Macoun also tends to get dropy and if ReTain was not used NAA should be applied for a stop drop.

	<u>Pressure</u>	<u>Brix</u>	<u>Starch</u>
Last week:	21.8	10.1%	1.5
This week:	23.9	9.8%	3.3

Jonathan

Jonathans, which traditionally come into maturity around the 14th of September in our region, are advancing nicely. A slightly green flesh, lower SI readings and high pressure readings indicates that the apple is still slightly immature. Growers may want to consider harvest for long-term storage within a week, but should rescind from harvesting for immediate fresh market sales.

	<u>Pressure</u>	<u>Brix</u>	<u>Starch</u>
Hunterdon County	22.1	13%	3.9

Other cultivars of interest

Jonagold is a cultivar that is close to harvest in Hunterdon County. Jonagold and the many strains of Jonagold ripen unevenly and will benefit from multiple pickings. Background color is one of the best indicators of maturity for this cultivar. Jonagold has a tendency to go rapidly soft in storage, so careful monitoring of this cultivar at harvest needs to be observed.

Honeycrisp has gained a lot of popularity over the past season due to its unrivaled crisp flesh texture. Like many of the other newer cultivars, Honeycrisp may benefit from multiple pickings. The SI should be used as the primary maturity indicator, but selecting for background color will be beneficial when growers are spot picking this cultivar. Honeycrisp has a tendency to be a heavy dropper under any stressful conditions. We notice drop beginning on this cultivar up to two weeks before harvest. Although the window for ReTain has long passed for stop drop control, growers are reminded that they can still use NAA for stop drop.

Liberty is another new scab resistant cultivar with excellent fruit quality if picked at the correct time. It needs to be kept in cold storage at least a month to a month and a half to obtain maximum fruit quality for fresh market sales. Liberty tends to drop heavily before it reaches optimum maturity on the tree. Our experience with this cultivar at the Rutgers Snyder

Farm indicates that it will benefit greatly from the use of ReTain. If ReTain was not utilized then NAA should be used for stop drop control.

Cortlands are maturing ahead of what we would traditionally expect in Northern New Jersey. Although formal maturity evaluations have not been conducted on this cultivar, numerous field observations in the Hunterdon County area and south indicate this cultivar is at or near acceptable maturity for fresh market sales.

Growers in the Northern parts of the state wishing to use ReTain on late season apple cultivars still have the opportunity to apply it to Staymans, Romes, Sun crisp, Granny Smith and NJ 3. Be sure to observe the 28-day pre harvest interval.

NAA for Stop Drop

NAA can be applied at 10-20 PPM. Remember that NAA needs 2-3 days following application to become effective. □

Calendar of Events

November 8-10, 2000 - Southeast Strawberry Expo, Raleigh, North Carolina. Contact NCSA, 1138 Rock Rest Rd., Pittsboro, NC 27312, phone 919-542-3687, fax 919-542-4037, e-mail - ncstrawberry@mindspring.com.

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