RUTGERS COOPERATIVE RESEARCH & EXTENSION AT THE NEW JERSEY AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION

PLANT & PEST ADVISORY

CRANBERRY EDITION $1.50 JUNE 28, 2005

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Field Update

Dan Schiffhauer, Agricultural Specialist, Ocean Spray Cranberries

Almost every cranberry bed in New Jersey is blooming by this time. Bloom appears quite good across the state; no signs of frost damage and little loss of bloom to **blossom worm** or **gypsy moth**. Bee activity was fairly low during the early part of bloom but seems to be picking up as bloom progresses. Theories for the lack of bee activity are manifold. The most popular invokes competitive bloom in the surrounding woodlands. This would certainly seem possible given the very cool spring weather. Plants that normally bloom before cranberry may be blooming later this year and luring honeybees away. I am not overly worried about pollination because it does not require too many hours of bee activity to set a crop. Bear in mind that cranberry uprights usually set 1 or 2 fruit out of the 5-7 flowers present. Honeybees don't start working at the crack of dawn, but they do forage until dark this time of the year. It is entirely possible that they will work a woodland bloom during one portion of the day and work cranberry during another. Bumblebee numbers have been disappointing this year, again due to the cool, wet spring. Bumblebee queens overwinter and look for nesting sites in the ground during the spring, and if the ground is saturated with rainfall many queens fail to start a colony. Bloom is proceeding quickly and that raises concern that we may experience the type of bloom typically seen with late held beds. These beds usually have an accelerated, shorter bloom period and don't set as large a crop as typical early drawn beds. The weather went from unusually cool to hot, without much chance for beds to grow.

Sparganothis moths are flying and pheromone traps have been in place for two weeks. Trap counts to date have been low but are beginning to pick up (see figure on next page). Peak flight should be during the next two weeks. **Spotted fireworm** moths are flying as well, albeit in greatly reduced numbers from past years. I have yet to see an egg mass of spotted fireworm, but they should be showing up by now. Growers contemplating spraying for this insect should consider using Confirm or Intrepid during late bloom. Spotted fireworm eggs typically hatch during late bloom and, as with most insects, small larvae are the easiest to kill. **Cranberry girdler** moths are flying as well, but I don't feel it worthwhile to monitor these insects with pheromone traps. I have never seen any correlation between relative trap count and likelihood of

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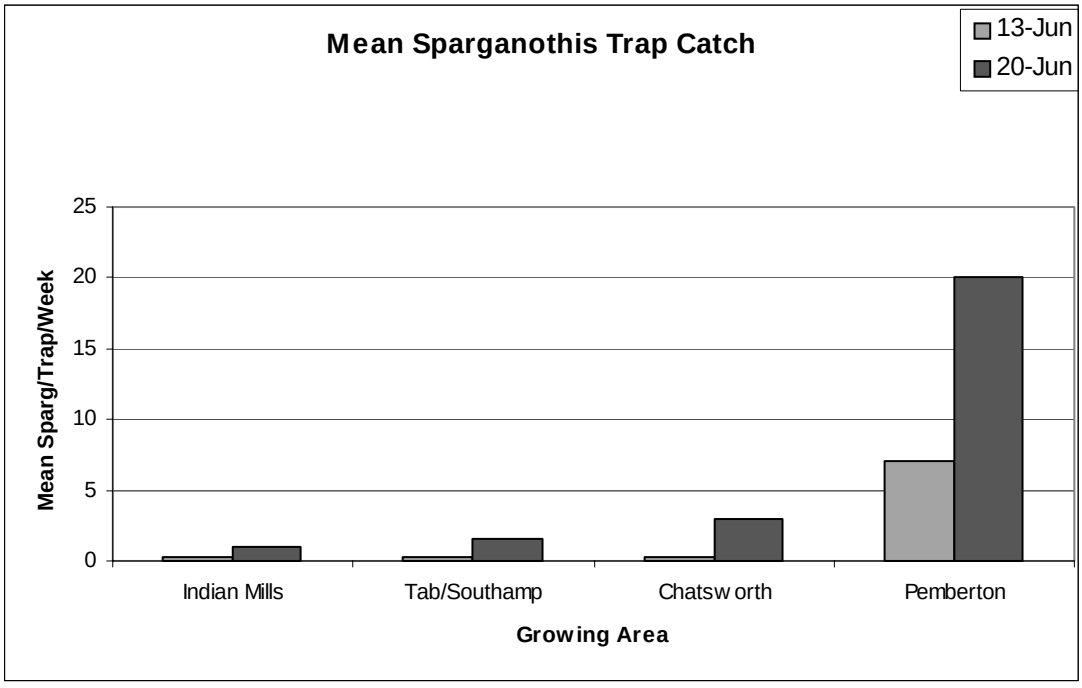
subsequent damage. In other words, high trap catches of cranberry girdler are not good indicators of risk to the bed. This insect is polyphagous and is very common on many grasses that grow on or near cranberry beds. We don't currently have any insecticides specifically targeted towards cranberry girdler and the best option for infested beds is sanding. Girdler larvae need the duff layer of old leaves and vines and sanding removes this, temporarily, from the bed.

Blackheaded fireworm has not been common and most spots were successfully controlled pre-bloom. There are a few areas that will require another spray during bloom. We are so very fortunate to have materials such as Confirm and Intrepid that can be applied during bloom. Second generation blackheaded fireworm infestations progress very rapidly and damage from this generation can take this year's crop and next year as well, so growers with this insect will need to check beds very closely during the next few weeks. It can be rather unpleasant to sweep sample during bloom, so visual scouting for blackheaded larvae is best.

Heavy rain is falling as I write this update! This is very, very good news for cranberry beds. I feel that fertilizer uptake is much more effective when rainfall occurs, as opposed to only irrigation. Irrigation is useful and absolutely necessary to keep vines alive during hot, dry periods, but nothing replaces rainfall for vine health. The very hot, dry weather in 1995 not only hurt that crop, but also negatively affected the 1996 crop. Remember, cranberries are a perennial crop and severe stresses often cause problems for more than one growing season.

Sparganothis male moth; Note the 'X' pattern on the wings. Source: University of Maine Cooperative Extension.



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