RUTGERS
New Jersey Agricultural
Experiment Station

The Blueberry Bulletin

A Weekly Update to Growers

March 26, 2024 **Vol. 40, No. 2**

- *Visit the Blueberry Bulletin webpage at njaes.rutgers.edu/blueberry-bulletin*
- *The 2024 Commercial Blueberry Pest Control Recommendations for New Jersey is available on* https://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/

BLUEBERRY CULTURE

Dr. Gary C. Pavlis, Ph.D
Atlantic County Agriculture Agent

As we begin the new season, I hope you had a great winter. The 2024 Commercial Blueberry Pest Control Recommendations for New Jersey may be picked up at my extension office or downloaded from the Rutgers NJAES web site at http://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/ . Enter blueberry in the search and the publication will appear.

If you have a problem during the season, please call me at (609) 625-0056.

Any comments, suggestions, constructive criticism about The Blueberry Bulletin newsletter would be greatly appreciated. Also, if you have any specific problems which you feel should be addressed, please let me know.

Help me to serve you better.

Here's hoping for all a very successful 2024.

Gary C. Pavlis, Ph.D.
Atlantic County Agricultural Agent

DISEASES

By Peter V. Oudemans, Ph.D.
Professor and Extension Specialist
Plant Pathology

Timing	Phomopsis	Mummy berry	Anthracnose
Week of March 25	Applications should begin	Applications should begin	N/A
Material	Indar or other FRAC 3	Indar or other FRAC 3	----
Week of April 1	Continue with 2nd application	Continue with 2nd application	N/A
Material	Indar or other FRAC 3	Indar or other FRAC 3	----
Week of April 20	N/A	N/A	Bloom Beginning
Material	----	----	Ziram is recommended

Mummy berry cup development. You can see the mummy development especially. in wet, poorly drained spots.

Developing leaf tissues in blueberry. The two center branches represent the most susceptible stages.

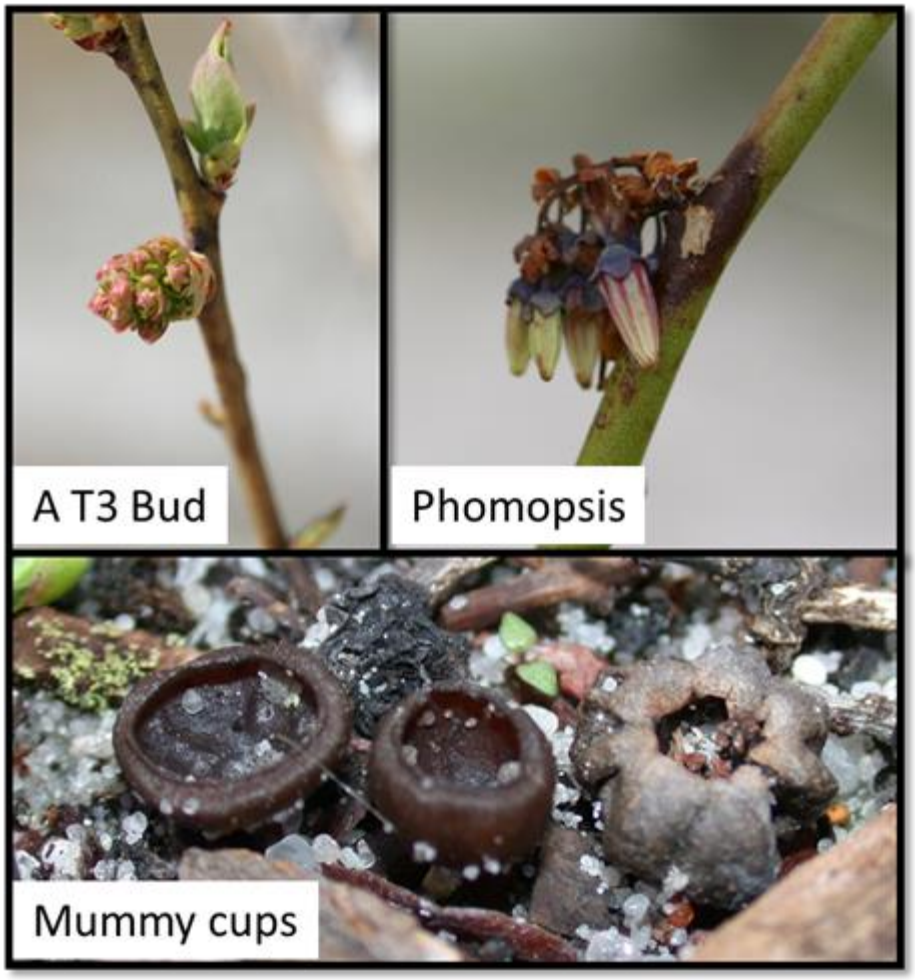
Mummy berry: Blueberry flower and leaf buds are breaking, and plants are susceptible to primary infections of mummy berry. This disease has not been a problem for several years, but last year it began to be more prevalent. For mummy berry control, two phases should be considered. The primary phase occurs when spores produced from the cups infect developing shoots. Blueberry cultivars are susceptible from leaf bud break until shoots are ON AVERAGE two inches in length. Infections occur as much as two weeks before the blight symptoms appear. The production of spores from blighted leaves must correspond with the flowering period for the disease to complete its lifecycle.

Control of the primary (leaf blighting) stage is critical and preventative action should be taken. Fungicide applications targeting leaf buds break ("squirrel ear") are effective.
Two fungicide applications are generally sufficient to control this stage since the recommended materials (Indar) are systemic. Cup development can be monitored in the field by scouting in the wet areas or sprays can be timed with plant development.

When scouting for cups remember that spore production occurs when stipe (stalk) form deep indentation at the tip and the tip begins to expand to form the cup.

For **Phomopsis** two applications of fungicide may be beneficial for susceptible cultivars such as Duke. Fungicide applications will have a diminishing return when flowers begin to open. Field with higher Phomopsis in 2023 are at greatest risk for 2024.

Key items to look for are illustrated below:



Blueberries Aren't Technically Blue

Contrary to their name and the immediate visual impression, blueberries aren't truly blue. In fact, blue is an extremely rare color in nature — and one blueberries don't possess. The fascinating science behind their appearance lies in the way that they reflect light. You see, blueberries' primary pigment comes from compounds called anthocyanins. These are actually responsible for red and purple hues. You might have noticed that blueberries appear more deep red or purple once cooked, but why do they look blue when they're raw?

Well, it turns out that the external appearance of blueberries is down to a layer of a waxy substance on their skin. This coating is capable of scattering blue light and UV light while absorbing all other colors of light in the spectrum. This means that our eyes see these berries as blue because it's the only light color reflected into our eyes that we're capable of perceiving. Nobody can be certain of the reason for this adaptation, but it might be to attract birds, who are able to see the scattered UV light. So, while blueberries may not be authentically blue, they appear to be blue because of the way light reflects off their waxy coating.