

The Blueberry Bulletin

A Weekly Update to Growers

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- ❖ Visit the Blueberry Bulletin webpage at njaes.rutgers.edu/blueberry-bulletin
- ❖ The 2022 Commercial Blueberry Pest Control Recommendations for New Jersey is available on njaes.rutgers.edu
- ❖ The Blueberry Bulletin will now be emailed to those who request it. We will no longer be mailing hard copies out. If you are not on our current list and would like to receive a copy, please call the office at (609) 625-0056.

BLUEBERRY CULTURE

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

Fertilizing Newly Planted Fields: Growers putting in a new field have requested information on fertilization. First, no fertilizer should be placed in the planting hole. When the plants are set out in the fields, usually in April or early May, the fruit buds should be rubbed or pruned off. With no crop present and only a small area of soil requiring fertilizer, about 125 lbs/A of 10-10-10 is sufficient (1 1/2 oz./bush). Sidedressing with a fertilizing spreader will require higher rates to compensate for open areas between plants. Special caution should be observed as to the time of fertilizing after planting.

Fertilizer should not be applied until a second growth starts. For example, if plants are set out while dormant, do not fertilize while the first crop of leaves is unfolding and changing from light green to dark green, wait for new growth. Making the first field application too soon has frequently caused reddened foliage and a delay of several weeks in the starting of new growth. Keep the fertilizer at least 2 inches away from the crowns of the young plants. In late-June, the application of fertilizer is usually made.

Note: Never put leaves, chips, sawdust etc. in the planting hole unless it has been composted for at least 2 years. Fresh organic matter ties up all nutrients and starves the blueberry plants.


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

PEST MANAGEMENT

Dr. Cesar Rodriguez-Saona, Extension Specialist in Blueberry Entomology, Rutgers University
Ms. Carrie Mansue, Senior Program Coordinator

Leps (Lepidoptera larva – leafrollers, spongy moth): This past week’s scouting shows an increase in spongy moth (Fig. 1) numbers, with an average of 0.1 larvae per bush and a high of 2.1 larvae per bush. Most spongy moth larvae are blown into the fields from surrounding wooded borders. Therefore, the recent windy weather will likely cause an increase in these counts. The combined treatment level for all Lep larvae (worms), including spongy moth, is 1 larva per 100 flower clusters. With the current state of honey bee health, it is to everybody’s advantage to make any pest treatments with as little impact on bees as possible. Try to stick with using any of the B.t. formulations when treating for small worms/Lep larvae and other materials like Intrepid, an insect growth regulator, for larger larvae.



Fig. 1. Spongy moth larva. Photo Credit: Kartlon Neidigh.

Cherry Fruitworm (CFW): Adults are active but at low numbers. Any B.t. materials applied for spongy moth caterpillars will help control newly hatched cherry fruitworm larvae. There is no trap threshold that can be used as a guide for treatment, and CFW is only being seen at a few locations. Cherry fruitworm larvae are usually active about 7-10 days before cranberry fruitworm, which is usually treated as soon as the bees come out.

Cranberry Fruitworm (CBFW) and Cherry Fruitworm (CFW) Traps: We have observed low numbers of CFW and no CBFW on traps in both Atlantic and Burlington Counties.

Insect Sampling Count Summary:

	LR/Tray	SM/Tray	PC/Tray	Thrips/Tray
Avg	0.082	0.101	0.018	0.913
High	0.6	2.1	0.4	47
LR = Leafrollers, SM = Spongy Moth, PC = Plum Curculio				

	AC CFW	BC CFW	AC CBFW	BC CBFW
Avg	1.3	0.5	0	0
High	1	2	0	0
AC = Atlantic County, BC = Burlington County, CFW = Cherry Fruitworm, CBFW = Cranberry Fruitworm				

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Grow a Better Future with the Organic Transition Initiative



HAMILTON SQUARE, N.J., April 21, 2023 - The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in New Jersey is accepting applications for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program's (EQIP) organic management standard funded through the agency's [Organic Transition Initiative](#) (OTI).

Farmers, ranchers, forest landowners, and other producers beginning or in the process of transitioning to organic certification are eligible to apply. While NRCS accepts applications for programs year-round, those interested should **apply by June 9, 2023** to be eligible for funding.

The new organic management standard gives producers the flexibility to get the assistance and education they need such as attending workshops or requesting help from experts or mentors. It supports conservation activities and practices required for organic certification and may provide foregone income reimbursement for dips in production during the transition period.

Flexible education and training activities can include field days, working alongside organic experts and more. You can work with NRCS field staff, approved technical service providers, and other approved organic partners.

This funding is part of the \$70 million in American Rescue Plan funding for technical and financial assistance as part of the OTI.

Higher payment rates and other options are available for underserved producers including socially disadvantaged, beginning, veteran, and limited resource farmers and ranchers.

To apply, contact your [local USDA Service Center](#).