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New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station

The Blueberry Bulletin

A Weekly Update to Growers

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- *Visit the Blueberry Bulletin webpage at njaes.rutgers.edu/blueberry-bulletin*
- *The 2020 Commercial Blueberry Pest Control Recommendations for New Jersey is available on njaes.rutgers.edu*

BLUEBERRY CULTURE

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

The blueberry harvest is wrapping up with some farms still picking 'Elliott'. Numerous visits to 'Duke' fields have turned up some plantings in pretty bad shape. Some of the cane death is stem blight but most is not. There is a general lack of leaves, with dead canes and in many cases, entire bushes have died. I have dug up a few of these bushes and the problem is not grubs, and it is not root rot. It is interesting to note that 'Bluecrop' bushes in the adjoining row look fine. This is due to the fact that 'Duke' has the tendency to produce fruit even when the plant is under stress. We have seen young plants produce so many flowers that no leaves are produced. In some cases the plant will actually kill itself. Early on we realized that all flowers on this variety must be removed the first two years. The same kind of thing is going on with the plants I saw this week. They did not have the root system to carry the fruit load that was on them. In one case, extreme weed pressure was robbing the plants of nutrients and water. When these plants were dug up the root system only went down 6-8 inches due to a hard layer of gravel. Between the weeds and the shallow root system, these plants weren't getting the water and nutrients to carry the fruit load. The grower will not usually realize that there is a hard pan until year 4 or 5, when the yield dramatically increases. By that time, the remedy for the situation is difficult. (Please call me if you find yourself in this situation and would like to discuss it.) Certainly, keeping competing weeds out of the planting is a minimum requirement. At this point, there isn't much that can be done except to keep the plant out of any further stress. Dead is dead so what we are trying to do is to bring back the plants that are weak. Timely watering is the best remedy. It is too late now for any soil applied nitrogen fertilizers however in some cases I believe a foliar application of N might give the plants a little "pick-me-up". Pruning out stem blighted canes is always a good practice.

I believe the take home message is that in many cases, there was a rush to plant fields without doing the required pre-plant checks. It would be prudent to take a back hoe into the field before planting and dig a hole. It doesn't have to be deep, three feet

would do it to see what layers of soil are there, is there a hard pan, where is the seasonal high water table, and what are the pH values? As more and more of these young plantings come into fruiting I am concerned that we will see more and more of this.

BLUEBERRY INSECT

Dr. Cesar Rodriguez-Saona, Extension Specialist in Blueberry Entomology, Rutgers University
Mr. Dean Polk, IPM Agent – Fruit
Ms. Carrie Denson, IPM Program Associate – Fruit

Spotted Wing Drosophila (SWD): This is the only pest of concern, and only on the latest varieties. The average Elliott field will require only 1-2 more treatments.

Aphids: Aphid populations are down to an average of 0.24% of terminals infested with a high of 8% last week. Aphid populations are now done for the season, and no further treatments are needed.

Putnam Scale: There is no change since last week. Scale infested fruit remains very low. Crawler traps have been put out, and the second generation should be starting in the near future.

Post-Harvest Treatments: These will need to be targeted specifically for **Sharpnosed Leafhopper** and **Putnam Scale**, if needed. These insects generally require different materials at different timings. So there is **No Such Thing as a "Clean-Up Spray,"** but rather some targeted post-harvest sprays, applied for specific pests when needed. Second generation leafhopper applications should target close to the peak flight of second generation adults, which should **start** to appear the second half of August. Scale treatments should be applied in fields which had 1st generation scale problems during early July. Second generation crawlers should start to appear any time now.

By the Numbers – Blueberry Trap Counts:

Trap Counts												
Week Ending	**CBFW-AC**		**CBFW-BC**		**SWD-AC**		**SWD-BC**		**OB-BC**		**OB-AC**	
	Avg	Max	Avg	Max	Avg	Max	Avg	Max	Avg	Max	Avg	Max
5/11	0.1	1	0	0								
5/18	0	0	0	0								
5/25	0.1	1	0.25	1	0.8	7	0	0				
5/30	0	0	0.25	1	.75	5	.55	1				
6/6	5.5	34	0.75	3	2	8	2.1	5				
6/13	5.6	22	3.5	8	4	14	7.7	20	3.2	11	18	340
6/19	7.2	48	6.5	18	4.64	30	4.9	16	71.75	675	21.4	68
6/27	0	0	3.5	8	2.8	12	4.3	25	1834	13750	462	2025
7/4	0.22	1	1	3	4.17	16	11.3	46	2421	8775	976	5062
7/11	0.11	1	0.25	1	5.8	27	6.6	22	1093	5000	1997	6075

7/18	0.11	1	0.5	2	5.3	19	4.6	14	769	5000	1575	6750
7/25	0.11	1	0.25	1	12.2	41	5.5	20	443	3500	920	4050
8/1	0	0	0	0	8	42	11	37	179	2025	520	4025
Week Ending	**SNLH – AC**		**SNLH-BC**		**BBM-AC**		**BBM-BC**					
	Avg	Max	Avg	Max	Avg	Max	Avg	Max	Avg	Max	Avg	Max
6/27	0.14	3	0.8	4	0	0	0	0				
7/4	0.08	1	0.8	5	0.009	1	0	0				
7/11	0.12	1	1.82	6	0	0	0	0				
7/18	0.11	2	1.16	5	0	0	0	0				
7/25	0	0	0	0	0.02	1	0	0				
8/1	0.04	1	0.3	2	0	0	0	0				
Key: PC=plum curculio, Scale=Putnam scale, CBFW=cranberry fruitworm, SWD=spotted wing drosophila, OB=oriental beetle, SNLH-sharpnosed leafhopper, BBM=blueberry maggot, BC=Burlington County, AC=Atlantic County												