



# The Blueberry Bulletin

## *A Weekly Update to Growers*

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- ❖ Visit the Blueberry Bulletin webpage at [njaes.rutgers.edu/blueberry-bulletin](https://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**

Blueberry harvest is progressing at a rapid pace due to the recent heat spell. Duke is in the second or third pick, Bluecrop has started and the new Draper fields are also ready to pick. With all this ripe fruit on the plants and the heat wave continuing it is critical to provide irrigation to the plants to decrease plant stress and berries from shriveling. Remember that blueberries are 84% water, so water stress will decrease fruit quality.

I have also seen fields with plants that have canes with fruit but no leaves. This is not scorch. The lack of leaves usually points to a root problem. The IPM program has shown that grubs can be found in many of our fields. Follow the recommendations in this newsletter for control measures. Some fields I looked at this week showed a lack of leaves and that was due to wet soils. This is always a difficult problem to fix. Increasing soil drainage is not an overnight fix. A call to the Soil Conservation folks may be warranted. **See article below on maintaining ditches.**

### **The “Great Debate” - Is Ditch Maintenance Considered Excavation?**

BY CLINT KALFELL, PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR, MONTANA811

The maintenance and creation of ditches, whether for drainage or irrigation are critical tasks in both road construction and agriculture. These activities, which always involve some form of excavation, raise significant concerns about the safety and legal implications associated with damage to underground utilities, especially pipelines transporting hazardous materials such as gasoline, diesel, or natural gas to your local community.

## Understanding Ditch Categories

Ditches are categorized into two types: road and agricultural. Agricultural ditches require frequent maintenance due to the accumulated silt and vegetation, necessitating periodic removal to maintain the functionality.

## Excavation and Legal Limitations

A key question typically arises regarding the removal of accumulated material in ditches. Does the process count as excavation, thereby necessitating a One Call notification for the identification of underground utilities that could be impacted by the removal of dirt and vegetation? State laws vary across the U.S. drastically. Some state laws say no, ditch cleaning or road grading is not considered excavation if you are not “changing the grade”. This is where the devil is in the details.

## What about determining the original grade?

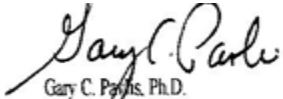
One challenge is determining the original bottom of a ditch, especially when using mechanical equipment. In cases where the ditch is not clearly marked or lined from the past, establishing the original grade becomes impossible to prove at times, and is a weak link for the excavator when it comes to liability. Some state laws offer exemptions for certain types of agriculture excavations, but the ambiguity remains, such as when cleaning irrigation ditches.

## Incidents and Responsibilities

There have been incidents where ditch cleaning, conducted without locating underground utilities, resulted in utility damage. These situations lead to hardships for the individual doing the digging (without a locate) when it comes to paying for the repairs. The real conflict is often who bears the cost of repair and implementing preventative measures, leading to the question - did you have a locate or not?

## Opinion:

Arguing over what constitutes excavation in the context of ditches seems fruitless. The use of mechanical equipment near ditches should always be accompanied by a locate request to ensure safety. The approach is not only a form of preplanning but also a free service acting as an insurance policy for the safety of all involved. In conclusion, while state laws and definitions vary, the emphasis should be on safety and precaution. A simple, proactive approach involving a locate request can prevent potential hazards and disputes, ensuring the safety of individuals and the integrity of the underground utilities and the services your community and neighbors count on.



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

## PEST MANAGEMENT

*Dr. Cesar Rodriguez-Saona, Extension Specialist in Blueberry Entomology, Rutgers University*

*Dr. Janine Spies, IPM Agent – Frui*

*Carrie Mansue, Senior Program Coordinator*

During the week of June 17<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>, 220 fields were scouted throughout Burlington and Atlantic Counties.

**% Injury to Infested Fruit.** The percent of new injury to developing berries from lepidopteran larvae and plum curculio was minimal.

Week End- ing	% Injury of Fruit by LR		% Injury of Fruit by PC		% Injury of fruit to CBFW		% Injury of fruit to CFW	
	Avg	Max	Avg	Max	Avg	Max	Avg	Max
5/11	0.17	3.9	0.80	12.7				
5/17	0.23	3.0	1.25	13.20				
5/24	0.10	1.40	0.45	11.30				
6/1	0.02	1.10	0.06	2.90				
6/7	0.001	0.10	0.01	0.70	0.02	0.70		
6/15	0.002	0.20	0.00	0.00	0.003	0.20	0.004	0.10
6/21	0.004	0.30	0.01	0.20	0.003	0.30	0	0

LR = Leafroller, PC = Plum Curculio, CBFW = Cranberry Fruitworm, CFW = Cherry Fruitworm

**Cranberry Fruitworm (CBFW) and Cherry Fruitworm (CFW).** This will be the final week of trapping data for CBFW and CFW, as we are no longer capturing moths entering the field.

Week Ending	CBFW Traps				CFW Traps			
	AC AVG	AC Max	BC AVG	BC Max	AC AVG	AC Max	BC AVG	BC MAX
4/19	0	0	0	0	0.44	2	0	0
4/26	0.4	3	1	2	0.1	1	0	0
5/4	0	0	0	0	12.1	25	9.5	14
5/11	0	0	0	0	17.25	44	20	24
5/17	0.031	1	0	0	2.25	4	8.25	14
5/24	0	0	0	0	5.75	16	8.75	18
6/1	0	0	0	0	2.125	7	3.25	5
6/7	0	0	0.5	2	1.5	3	2	4
6/15	0	0	0.5	1	0.5	3	0.5	2
6/21	0	0	0	0	0.125	0	0	0

AC = Atlantic County, BC = Burlington County, CBFW = Cranberry Fruitworm, CFW = Cherry Fruitworm

**Scale Traps and Infested fruit.** This week, we inspected scale traps and infested fruit. The average scale activity in traps was 49.5 scales per trap, with a high of 154.

Week Ending	% Injury of Fruit by Scale	
	Average	Maximum
6/7	0.04	0.60

6/15	0.05	2.10
6/21	0.03	1.00

**% of Infestation on Lower Shoots for Leafroller and Aphids.** We are still finding aphids on the lower shoots. On average, 10% of lower shoots were infested with aphids, with a maximum infestation rate of 88%.

Week Ending	% Lower Shoots Leafroller		% Lower Shoots Aphids	
	Avg	Max	Avg	Max
5/24	0.02	2.00	11.03	52
6/1	0.066	4.0	15.37	72
6/7	0.06	4.00	14.66	96
6/15	0.00	0.00	15.42	88
6/21	0.06	2.0	10.31	88

**Insect traps.** All traps are set in Burlington and Atlantic Counties. Spotted-wing drosophila (SWD) trap captures are increasing. The best insecticide choices include pyrethroids (Brigade/Bifenture, Danitol, Mustang Maxx, Hero), organophosphates (Imidan, Malathion), spinosyns (Delegate), carbamates (Lannate), and diamides (Exirel, Verdepryn).

Week Ending	SWD		OB		BBM		SNLH	
	Avg	Max	Avg	Max	Avg	Max	Avg	Max
6/7	19.75	64	300.81	2025	0.037	2	0.0173	0.2
6/15	28.31	100	707	4050	0.20	15	0.18	3.00
6/21	33	164	2986	15525	0.04	4	0.18	4

SWD = Spotted Wing Drosophila, OB = Oriental Beetle, BBM = Blueberry Maggot Fly, SNLH = Sharp-nosed Leafhopper

In the past two weeks, we have observed fall webworm in the fields (Picture 1). If detected, it is recommended to prune out the infested branches and remove them from the fields.



Picture 1. Fall webworm on blueberry branches. Photo by Carrie Mansue.