



The Blueberry Bulletin

A Weekly Update to Growers

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- ❖ 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

Stunt Disease: The removal of a bush with stunt disease should never be attempted before some effort has been made to control the leafhoppers in it. The removal process could actually facilitate the spreading of the disease. The agitation of the bush will dislodge the leafhoppers, causing them to hop to another healthy bush, thereby transmitting the phytoplasma from a diseased bush to a healthy bush. Spray each diseased bush with a garden knapsack sprayer before it is rogued out. Malathion is safe to use and is effective against all stages of leafhopper. Spraying the entire field is not necessary at this time. In fields severely infected with stunt disease and in nurseries seeking NJ Department of Agriculture Certification, a special spray for leafhopper

adults is needed. The leafhoppers are still in the wingless nymph stage and usually do not start the flight period until late in August.

Stunt Symptoms are described as an overall dwarfing of the bush, hence the name stunt. Small leaves that are cupped downward or puckered are characteristic symptoms. Leaves on infected bushes are often chlorotic, with chlorosis most pronounced among the leaf margins and between lateral veins. Midribs and lateral veins usually retain normal green coloration. Chlorotic areas often turn a brilliant red in the later summer. Stem internodes become shortened and growth of normally dormant buds caused twiggy branching.


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

PEST MANAGEMENT

Dr. Cesar Rodriguez-Saona, Extension Specialist in Blueberry Entomology, Rutgers University
Dr. Janine Spies, IPM Agent – Fruit
Carrie Mansue, Senior Program Coordinator – Fruit

See the table below for trap data for the week of July 28th – Aug 3rd from Burlington and Atlantic Counties.

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
6/29	71.72	300	5800	16875	0.05	6	0.10	3.00
7/6	38.82	405	3239	16000	0.02	2	0.02	1.00
7/13	23.36	117	2654	16000	0.08	2	0.04	1.00
7/19	54.46	390	688	8100	0.02	2	0	0
7/26	27.37	137	190.18	2025	0.01	1	0.09	3
8/3	14.09	42	142.86	2025	0	0	0.28	7

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

Spotted-Wing Drosophila (SWD), Blueberry Maggot (BBM), Oriental Beetle (OB), and Sharp-nosed Leafhopper (SNLH) traps: Trap counts continue to decline or remain low. We will continue to monitor for second-generation SNLH adults to determine when treatment is needed for control.

Scale Traps: Second generation crawlers will be monitored in the field by placing double-sided sticky tape around canes in areas where scale insects are suspected. Information on treatment options for second generation scales will be provided in future articles.

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WEED MANAGEMENT

Dr. Thierry E. Besancon, Ph.D, Extension Weed Science Specialist, Rutgers University

Late summer / early fall applications of systemic herbicides for controlling troublesome perennial weeds

The blueberry season may be over but **late summer and fall are perfect times to work on tough-to-control perennial weeds such as Virginia creeper vine, bindweed, greenbrier, Canada thistle, goldenrod, and poison ivy.** These perennials are among the most difficult weeds to eradicate, especially because of their ability to generate new shoots from their root systems. Successful management strategies will mostly rely on herbicide that can move from the leaf to the below-ground plant parts. Timely initial application and consistency at controlling any regrowth with follow-up spot treatments are crucial for long-term control of these weeds.



Field bindweed (upper left), goldenrod (lower left) and greenbrier (right) are some tough weed species of NJ blueberry and will warrant extra time for achieving successful control

More herbicide will be translocated to underground storage parts of the plant in late summer or fall than with early season applications, increasing your chance of successfully controlling these perennial weeds.

Glyphosate (Roundup or other generic products) is the only postemergence herbicide labeled on blueberry that can provide good control of perennial weeds. Late summer and fall are good times for applying glyphosate as plant sap movement is mostly directed toward the roots where nutrients will be stored in anticipation of next season. Therefore, large volume of glyphosate can easily be translocated from the leaves to the roots, improving the efficiency of the herbicide at killing below-ground storage organs. It is **VERY IMPORTANT** for glyphosate to be applied when weed leaves are still green before fall colors appear.

Use extreme care not to contact green blueberry tissues (stems and leaves) with glyphosate. Glyphosate absorbed by blueberry leaves and green bark moves within the bush and can kill whole canes or bushes. Weeds such as bindweed, Virginia creeper, and greenbrier may need to be pulled out of bushes so they can be treated safely. This may seem too slow to be practical, but consider what these weeds cost in lost income. Bushes covered by Virginia creeper vine may yield just 20% of their potential. This easily equates to a \$5 to \$10 loss per bush. The loss is incurred each year and increases as the vines spread to neighboring bushes. Investing 15 minutes to carefully pull vines out of that bush and safely treat them on the ground is money well spent.

Glyphosate should be applied through low pressure spot treatment to limit drift movements. Glyphosate absorption will be improved if ammonium sulfate (17 lbs / 100 gal water) is added to your spray mixture. For effective control, at least 50% of the foliage should be wet with glyphosate applied as a 2% solution (see your product's label for rate necessary to reach this concentration).

Consider also "cut stump" applications for Virginia creeper or poison ivy that have large diameter stems. Apply a 2% glyphosate solution to the cambium (inner bark area) **IMMEDIATELY** after cutting the stem. Don't let time for cutting to dry as this would prevent glyphosate absorption and translocation to below-ground plant parts.

Always apply glyphosate on weeds that are actively growing and not under drought stress.