



“Fruit Facts” – Thursday, March 7th, 2024

Mario Miranda Sazo and Janet van Zoeren

Don't Forget to Sign Up for the 2024 Fruit Facts!

With the below announcement of a **very early spring prediction in 2024** (green tip dates for **early cultivars @ March 9-15**; and for **Macs and the rest of the cvs. @ March 14-18**), we are also beginning to send out Fruit Facts issues already this week! For now, we will continue to send to everyone who was subscribed to receive Fruit Facts last year, but do make sure to sign up for this additional subscription when you enroll in our program via your county office.

To Do Today

Be Ready if a Record Early Season Occurs in 2024! By Mario Miranda Sazo, Craig Kahlke, Janet van Zoeren and Terence Robinson

Surprisingly, the majority of the early cultivars (Idared, NY-2, Ginger Gold, Zestar) are at the early **silver tip** stages in inland sites across our region by now (review attached bud phenology pictures taken in Orleans and Wayne orchards yesterday). The most advanced Idared trees in very early sites were at **35-40% silver tip** and NY-2 buds were about **20-30% silver tip** yesterday (March 6). In a few cases, almost 40-50% of the Idared buds were at silver tip in inland sites yesterday. Several other cultivars that are not supposed to be early cultivars (i.e. Honeycrisp) also showed silver tips but to a lesser extent at around 3-5% in early sites. It seems that a very unusual/erratic winter (with great temperature swings/variations) with relatively high temps in early January and late February and almost zero snow cover has advanced bud phenology for the early cultivars at the warmer inland sites.

Fruit tree buds have certainly responded to the 2024 warmer temperatures and nice sunny weather conditions we recently had in the LOF region. Our most current heat unit calculations are **predicting a green tip date for early cultivars @ March 9-15**; and for **Macs and the rest of the cvs. @ March 14-18**. It is hard to believe there is a potential for another record early season like we had in 2012. If this is the case, Lake Ontario fruit growers should prepare and get their sprayers ready (clean, calibrate, etc.) for an early spray season in 2024.

More bud phenology updates will be sent as we closely monitor the start of the 2024 apple growing season early next week.

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