Cornell University
Cooperative Extension

Lake Ontario Fruit Program
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"*Fruit Facts*" – Tuesday, July 15th, 2025

Mario Miranda Sazo and Janet van Zoeren

Registration Open for our Annual Apple Socials - the first is this Thursday evening in Wayne County.

Register Here: https://lof.cce.cornell.edu/event.php?id=2093

Sponsorship Opportunities here: https://lof.cce.cornell.edu/sponsor_new_event.php?event_id=2093

Registration Open for our 3rd Annual Western NY Fruit Growers Tour July 31 in Wayne County!

Register here: https://lof.cce.cornell.edu/event_preregistration_new.php?id=2066

To Do Today

Recommendation of deficit irrigation (DI) for Honeycrisp in late July: This year we are recommending that irrigation of 'Honeycrisp' orchards be reduced on July 15 and be suspended on August 1 to limit the uptake of K to limit bitter pit incidence. Growers should limit irrigation as much as possible and only water if the rest of July is exceptionally dry. This imposed water stress can reduce bitter pit by limiting vigor, reducing K uptake and reducing excessive fruit size as both vigorous trees and large fruit size contribute to bitter pit development. However, even with the suspension of irrigation, we cannot control rainfall, and in many years, large storm systems bring large amounts of rain to Western NY.

Summer pruning: This practice can be started only for early cultivars. In some cases, and to avoid sunburned fruit, summer pruning should be conducted only in the east side of the row and until 6-7 ft height from the ground.

Other considerations about summer pruning of apples:

Do not summer prune apple trees until they have filled their allotted space. Pruning immature trees in the summer will help induce enhanced color but will set back tree growth and future yield potential for that block

Start summer pruning after the terminal bud shoots have stopped growing. By waiting, you will prevent "witches broom" growth from occurring near the cut and will reduce the risk of winter injury resulting from excessive late shoot growth.

Generally, early maturing varieties should be pruned first. These normally shut down growth first. Summer pruning will still result in good coloring of fruit even with little more than a week before the first pick. Remember, there is always considerable block to block variation. Check each block since differences in weed control, soil type, and fertilizer programs can all influence the time of terminal bud set.

Do as little cutting as possible when summer pruning. Always keep the objective in mind when pruning. If your objective is to improve light interception and fruit color, limit pruning to the removal of limbs and foliage that prevents light from reaching the fruit. Excess removal of foliage will weaken the tree and may harm the fruit's ability to mature. If your objective is to contain tree size, cut back to weak side limbs or fruiting spurs just as you would in the winter on those same branches. Don't be afraid to remove some apples. Remember that if you are making the proper cut for color there will be better apples underneath.

Cut into two year old or older wood. Cutting into one year wood will induce "crows feet", unwanted late growth, and increase susceptibility to winter injury. A good rule of thumb is to cut back to the first apples on spur type varieties, and past the first apples on terminal bearers.

Be extremely careful with the wood removed from the tree. Careless summer pruning can be "worse than a hail storm". There are very few cases where summer pruning can be justified when a ladder is used. First, it is too expensive. Secondly, the risk of dropping brush through the tree and bruising fruit is too great.

Hand thinning reminders: We recommend that you count total fruit per tree on 5-10 representative trees in each block and reduce fruit number (via hand thinning, ideally with a platform) to the most profitable crop load (your targeted fruit number per tree). Hand thinning will be necessary in blocks where final fruit set (desired number of fruit/tree at harvest) is still relatively high in the tops of the trees.

- Early hand thinning will help somewhat to mitigate biennial bearing in Honeycrisp, where floral initiation is earlier than the rest of the cultivars. Please review the recommendations for return bloom sent in previous Fruit Facts.
- Early hand thinning will also improve fruit size in small-fruited varieties like **NY-1 and Gala**.
- Take advantage of your platforms to get hand thinning done quickly and more efficiently this 2025 season.

Avoid the common mistake of excessive crop loads in years 2 to 4 which leads to too little tree growth (varieties differ in their biennial bearing tendency and this must be incorporated into the crop loads allowed on young trees).

Cultivar[1]	**Growth Habit**	**Biennial bearing tendency**	**Crop load per tree after hand thinning**
Honeycrisp[2]	Weak growing cultivar	Biennial	2nd year: 12-18 apples 3rd year: 20-35 apples 4th year: 40-70 apples
Fortune, Fuji, Golden Delicious", Jonagold, Mutsu, Spy	Strong growing cultivar	Biennial	2nd year: 16-20 apples 3rd year: 25-40 apples 4th year: 65-80 apples
Gala, Empire, Mac, Rome, Idared	Medium growing cultivar	Annual (more reliable bearer)	2nd year: 20-25 apples 3rd year: 30-50 apples 4th year: 80-100 apples

[1] For **NY1 trees** which had moderate or poor growth in the first year or were planted on a weak rootstock, these trees should be de-fruited because fruits will outcompete with overall tree and shoot leader growth for carbohydrates and water.

[2] Please remember that hand thinning in Honeycrisp should start not later than @ 38-42mm. It is critical and should be done for good return bloom next year.

Keep irrigating if you have water available for your blocks ! We have started the phase of cell expansion and water shortages at this point can be critic and hard to recover later on the season. Irrigate if you have trickle installed.

With this hot weather watch irrigation needs also for new plantings: New plantings can stop growth if irrigation is not applied (if available at your farm). Please remember that irrigation is an essential tool for maximum tree growth on new plantings.

Frequency of irrigation depends on soil type: With sandy soils, water should be added either daily or every 2 days. With silt or clay soils, the daily amount of water needed can be added up for several days.

Remember, if irrigation fails, fails nutrition.

Now is the time to prune one year old shoots in the orchard and nursery:

It is applicable for almost any grafted orchard situation (side-grafted, top-worked, or beaver-grafted), green or 'ellepot' trees planted in previous summers, plant-in-place projects (budded or bench-grafted trees established in previous seasons), multileader trees, and for the 'grow-through' apple tree production method, you can now prune

the one-year old shoots and leave them with a stub of 4-fingers length (for all at the top and some in the middle of the tree). Leave a longer fruiting unit especially at the bottom of the tree if they have 2-3 flower buds. Use your own hand or 'una cuarta' in the Spanish language to guide the length of the pruning cut. The fruitful fruiting units after this type of pruning should be 12-16 inches length (according to the in-row spacing or the space between leaders/root if it's a high density grafted orchard). Favor/produce a more tubular type of tree via pruning now.

Disease and Pest Outlook:

- **Continue to watch for fireblight infections and to cover new growth.**
  - In extreme situations (i.e. predicted windstorms, hail, thunderstorms), Strep (50day PHI) may be warranted. Streptomycin is considered to have 24hours "kickback" activity, and 48hours forward reach.
  - Long term, the recommendation to address summer shoot blight strikes is to apply prohexiadione calcium (i.e. Kudos) at 12 oz/100 gal, then allow the trees to take it up for at least a day, and then to apply a copper (i.e. CS2005, the Badge Products, MasterCop, or Cueva). Then prune out strikes on a dry day (or remove the entire tree in many cases – it may be tempting to try to save the tree but only do so if you will be able to really remove all the bacteria).

- **All farms with susceptible fruit should be managing for SWD.**
  - Don't try to extend your spray reapplication schedule with SWD.
  - Pick fruit as often as possible, harvesting fruits as soon as they become ripe to avoid giving SWD an opportunity to develop on your farm.
  - For insecticide options for SWD, view the SWD Insecticide Quick Guide for Berries (updated in 2025) and the 2024 Cherry Fruit Fly Quick Guide (updated in 2024).
  - For updates on SWD and other pests, sign up now for the **NY Berry Pest Monitoring Blog.**

- **Woolly apple aphid** continues to build up in many blocks, although the rains seem to have set them back some. Scout now and manage WAA problem blocks before they have time to build up large colonies that can protect the center aphids from any contact with a spray. WAA can be controlled by Beleaf, Sefina, or Sivanto Prime at this timing. Those will also manage **rosy apple and green/spirea aphids**, which have been present in high numbers.

- **Apple maggot fly: the threshold for a non-baited trap is a 2 apple maggot flies per week per trap**. Apple maggot management options include the diamides: Altacor (5day PHI) and Exirel (3day PHI), neonicotinoid: Assail (7day PHI), organophosphate: Imidan (7day PHI), and the pyrethroids: Baythroid (7day PHI) and Danitol and Mustant Maxx (both 14day PHI).

- **Summer diseases** such as **sooty blotch and flyspeck**, **black rot, white rot and bitter rot** should be managed now as we move into mid-summer.
  - Products that are effective for SBFS, and black, white, and bitter rots include Flint Extra (14day PHI), Inspire Super (14day PHI), Luna Sensation (14day PHI), Merivon (0day PHI), and Pristine (0day PHI).
  - **In general, fungicide covers for the rots go on every 14 days**, but remember that 1.5" of rainfall would trigger a re-cover (rule of thumb, varies some by product).