Fruit FAX

Horticultural and Pest Management Notes, produced by Lake Ontario Fruit Program, CCE

From FAX: 585-798-5191 **D. Breth & M. Miranda S.** **April 23, 2013**

The weather forecast is for sunny weather today with an east wind, high temp in low 60's. But showers are predicted for Wednesday and continuing through Thursday with high temps in the 50's.

Meeting Notice:

Tuesday April 23, 3-5pm: Precision Nutrient, Weed Management and GPS Planting Meeting
Lamont Fruit Farm, 12703 Stillwater Rd., Waterport, Orleans County, follow the Cornell event signs.

This is a field meeting with multiple activities with Cornell faculties Terence Robinson and Lailiang Cheng for all WNY fruit growers and consultants. Come to see and learn: (1) how guided soil sampling is conducted in a Super Spindle apple orchard, (2) how the soil data is then used to create a management zone map, and (3) how soil sampling sites can be placed according to soil variability. There will be also a GPS planting unit to understand the pros and cons of more precise planting technologies when establishing a new apple orchard. Debbie Breth will walk you through fall herbicide treatments to observe results, and do some weed ID.

Pest Management Notes…

Apple scab: Apple buds on are between green tip to ¼ in green on the later varieties like Rome, Golden, Honeycrisp. But Gingergold, Idared, SweeTango, NY2 are between ½ inch green with leaves peeling back and will be at tight cluster with a couple more warm days. Most other varieties in most locations except right on the lakeshore are ¼ to ½ inch green. There appears to be only a good warm day difference in bud development between lake sites and inland sites. Apple scab season is in full swing. Those of you who applied a copper last week, need to renew fungicide residue today for the next potential infection predicted for Wednesday. Do not apply copper in fresh fruit varieties after ¼ inch green, but in processing varieties if you used mancozeb or captan/mancozeb last week, you can still use copper where fire blight is established before this rain. Use the low end of the rate range of the copper formulation you plant to use. If you have high pressure form last season, this week would be a good timing to use Syllit at 2 pt/acre(if no resistance detected on your farm) plus mancozeb (3 lb/a)) or Captan 80 (2.5 lb/a). (Do not mix Syllit with copper or chlorpyrifos insecticides because nozzle clogging may result.) Sulfur continues to be effective for control of powdery mildew when started early by tight cluster.

Brown rot blossom blight is a concern on stone fruit starting at white bud on cherry and plums, and pink bud on peaches and apricots. Conditions have not been very favorable for brown rot blossom blight infections (wet weather with temperatures above 60F). Apricots are blooming so pay close attention to brown rot blossom blight conditions. Under low pressure conditions, I would start with Bravo (or chlorothalonil) or captan. Under higher disease pressure, options for control of brown rot blossom blight include 1) Rovral in all stone fruit crops (especially where European brown rot is established in tart cherries) for 2 sprays per season but not after petal fall , 2) DMIs (Indar, Tilt, Quash) unless resistance is established to DMI's, 3) AP fungicides including Vangard or Scala, which are equal in efficacy with 4) Strobies (QoIs) like Pristine. Rotate between fungicide classes for blossom blight, fruit set, and preharvest sprays to manage fungicide resistance in brown rot. Be sure label includes your target stone fruit crop. Peaches are still at swollen bud: It is time to hang traps for oriental fruit moth to mark the biofix - but typically, no need for any control measures until petal fall on peaches.

Plan for mite management: Oil is not a common option since it is incompatible with captan or sulfur in fungicide program. Prebloom miticide options that affect egg and larval stages of European red mites include Apollo, Savey, Onager, or Zeal.

San Jose Scale? Now that the frosts are past, it is safe again to apply oil for SJS using 2 gallons/100 or use Esteem (4-5 oz./A) plus oil (2 gal/100) or Lorsban (chlorpyrifos) ½ inch green to tight cluster. I have observed that when chlorpyrifos is used prebloom, wooly apple aphid issues are reduced.

Blueberries are at budbreak with about 1/8 inch of unfolded leaf buds developed. Any wet weather will be conducive for mummyberry and Botrytis. Mummyberry will be an issue with rainy weather in plantings with a history of mummyberry. Lightly disking or raking the groundcover under the bushes to stop the mummified fruits from producing spores, practical in a small planting. Start with captan under light pressure but use Orbit, Switch, or Indar 2F as disease pressure increases.

Horticulture Notes…

Planting the Young Apple Tree Carefully. The roots of a young tall spindle apple tree contain much stored nitrogen, hormones, and other elements, which are used in forming both new root growth and new top growth. Any broken or injured roots should be trimmed off, but the root system should not be reduced more than necessary prior to planting. Growers should plant with at least 4-6 inches of rootstock out the ground. The soil should be packed firmly around the roots in order to establish good contact. At about two weeks after planting the trees should receive a small dose of nitrogen (1/4 lb. of calcium nitrate) carefully applied in a doughnut shaped band around each tree.

Pruning and Managing the Tall Spindle Apple Tree after Planting. Heading of the leader of a young apple tree after planting is undesirable as it removes a significant portion of the tree structure already produced in the nursery. Even if a whip is planted, the leader is not pruned or headed at planting for the Tall Spindle system. Heading the leader disrupts and changes forever the natural growth and branching patterns of a young apple tree on a dwarfing rootstock intended to be grown as a Tall Spindle tree. We instead recommend applying Maxcel to stimulate branching of an "unheaded" whip so a more "calm tree" (without much new upright growth as result of the heading cut) can be produced in the orchard.

Corrective Pruning of Feathers after Planting. If you plant a Tall Spindle apple block with feathered trees you should (1) not head the leader, (2) remove any feathers larger than 2/3 diameter of the leader with a bevel cut, (3) if there are less than three feathers remove them with a bevel cut and treat the tree as a whip as described below, (4) tie down the feathers below horizontal before mid June.

If you plant a Tall Spindle apple block with whips, you should: (1) not head the leader, (2) to ensure adequate lateral branching use a backpack sprayer and apply MaxCel with a single nozzle at 500 ppm (6.4 ounces/gallon) to the leader from the tip down to 24 inches above the soil at 10-15 days after bud break. (3) to improve branching even more you may combine the MaxCel treatment with scoring above every other bud at bud swell along the leader from 24 to 45 inches high.

Today a modern tall spindle planting must be supported with 12 foot posts so trees are properly supported to quickly reach the top trellis wire (10 feet) by the end of the second or third year. A good, strong, and tall support system for a high density orchard must be viewed as an investment (rather than just an orchard establishment cost!) that allows fruit production in the early years while preserving the vertical tree structure.

Pruning peaches: Dry, warmer weather is ideal for peach pruning at pink or bloom stages. Pruning under these weather conditions limits the spread of Cytospora canker. The following are basic pruning recommendations for any peach tree at the pink or bloom stages: (1) prune out most, if not all of the vigorous upright growth. Prune it all the way to the branch it originated, (2) pruning opens the tree up to allow sunlight penetration and air movement, (3) prune out any dead or diseased wood, (4) cut out any crossing limbs, (5) prune off 1/3 to ½ of the remaining branch and thin out wood keeping the best pencil size, (6) remove all shoots less than 6" long because short shoots produce small fruit, (7) remove all previous-season shoots with branches with shoots originating from auxiliary buds during the summer. These shoots are too vigorous, (8) remove shoots hanging below the vertical because they produce small fruit, and (9) keep about ¼ as many branches as the desired number of fruit and thin trees to remove all but 4 fruits on each shoot.

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