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

From FAX: 585-798-5191 D. Breth & M. Miranda S May 3, 2013

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The weather forecast is high temps for the next several days in the mid-70's, but cooler closer to Lake Ontario, and low temperatures for the next several days in the low 50's. There is no chance of showers predicted until early next week, and then only 10% chance.

### ***Pest Management Notes...***

**Fire blight:** I have seen what appears to be oozing from last year's infection with these warm temperatures in inland sites. Some Asian pears started to bloom on Sunday, and others started to open yesterday depending on location and variety. Apple buds have gone from tight cluster on Monday to first bloom today in Idared, Gingergold, 20 oz., in inland sites. Apple varieties closer to Lake Ontario will be at pink bud over the weekend, and likely blooming early next week depending on the lakeshore breeze keeping the high temperatures in the 60's. For apples and pears that started to bloom yesterday or earlier in inland sites, generally south of Rt. 104 across the region, we will generate enough degree hours to reach the 198 DH used as the threshold for blossom blight in the Maryblyt model by May 4 or 5. But with the dry weather, I would wait a bit longer for more blossoms to open before protecting with streptomycin. For those of you in an area where streptomycin resistant *Erwinia amylovora* has been reported, it will be important for you to tank mix oxytetracycline with streptomycin preferably before the blossom blight infection is completed with blossom wetting.

For any orchards closer to the lakeshore that may have started to bloom, likely only some pears, all the models are predicting a low risk of infection through the weekend. The high risk is in sites where the daytime high will be in the mid-70's or higher over the weekend. **If you would like to see blossom blight infection risk in specific weather stations, go to NEWA** where the results for Cougarblight are shown. Go to this website: <http://newa.cornell.edu/index.php?page=apple-diseases>. Select fire blight in the Apple diseases box, then location, then hit calculate and be sure to set first bloom date. There are several new stations added this year to the system.

**Apple scab:** There is no risk of scab infection for now with the dry forecast, but a word of warning - Dry years are the years we get the worst scab control because we cut back on protectant fungicide and then we get a 4-day shower right in the peak of ascospore release during bloom.

**Powdery mildew** will now be an issue with optimum temperatures between 66-72F and more than 70% RH. Topguard and Rally (using the higher end of rates still works for some) in tight cluster should start now. Or use Flint or other stroby with mancozeb as a protectant spray before we get another scab infection.

**Last call for pink insecticide sprays before bloom!** Prebloom miticide options that affect egg and larval stages of European red mites include Apollo, Savey, Onager, or Zeal. You need to rotate mode of action of miticides from year to year – if you used abamectin last year, switch to other mode of action such as Apollo or Savey (10A), or Nexter or Portal (21), etc.

**Check in with your beekeeper** and make sure your pollination needs will be filled.

**Stone fruit crops are blooming** – but no pressure for now for brown rot, need wet weather with high temperatures in the 60's to get that disease going.

**Oriental fruit moths are just beginning to fly.** Traps were zeroes on Monday when we checked, and Wednesday, we had single moths caught in many of the locations. This is great weather for OFM flight. Next week we will be hanging codling moth traps and expect flight to start about mid-bloom. If you plan to install mating disruption pheromones for codling moth, you can start as early as pink and continue through bloom, but hopefully the job is complete before any moths are caught in your area. No need for OFM control now until peaches or apples are at petal fall if trap counts are high.

**Good time for post-emergent weed control,** especially grasses using Poast or Select in many crops, and Stinger for Canada thistle in stone fruit and strawberries, but do not tank mix these 2 herbicides due to the adjuvant requirement with grass herbicides. This is not a good time to apply pre-emergent herbicides that need to be watered before weed seeds germinate, which they are now! Herbicides that need to be watered in include Prowl, Surflan, Sinbar, Simazine, diuron, Solicam, Matrix, Sandea if preemergent (but not post-emergent), and Alion.

### ***Horticultural Notes...***

**Pre-bloom nutrition management:** Pre-bloom nutrients should be applied including 3 lb. of urea (feedgrade) and 1lb. solubor. In orchards where Zn is low, include Zn-chelate at the labeled rate per 100 gallons dilute. The treatment can be concentrated up to 3X and can be tank mixed with most fungicide combinations. The exception is the water soluble bags which must be pre-dissolved before adding to the tank with Boron.

**Peaches** started to bloom this past weekend and significant winter damage has been observed in some Wayne County orchards. Little or no damage has been observed in Orleans and Niagara County or at Geneva. The winter damage likely occurred the week of the EXPO in January when some locations in Wayne County had temperatures dip below -10°F. In some case almost all of the fruit buds were lost while at other locations a lesser amount of damage occurred. For those growers who had some winter damage it is critical to make a bud damage assessment now and then adjust pruning severity to match the damage. You only need 10% of the blossoms for a viable crop. We suggest waiting a few days before pruning the sites with damage. Depending on the damage we recommend one of two strategies: (1) If all flower buds were lost, this year is an opportunity to reduce the height of the tree (especially with V-systems) and bring the fruiting zone down. Head each scaffold arm at approximately 10 feet above the ground by cutting to an upright side shoot. Stub back all lateral limbs that are large to a viable bud near the scaffold arm to develop new fruiting wood near the scaffold arm. Make sure the center of the tree is open by removing all limbs growing into the center. This extra amount of light will rejuvenate your trees and result in new fruiting wood in the lower part of the canopy. (2) Where 10% or more flower buds are alive do a very light pruning removing only the larger shoots that grow into the center of the V and upright suckers. Leave all fruiting twigs intact. A second step is to make an assessment of how many fruits are needed for a reasonable crop (number of bushels expected per tree X number of fruit per bushel) and then reduce the number of fruiting shoots to provide that number of fruits. Even if a light pruning is done make sure to remove shoots in the upper part of the tree that shade the lower part of the tree or next year they will be no good fruiting wood in the lower part of the tree.

Every effort has been made to provide correct, complete, and up-to-date pesticide recommendations. Nevertheless, changes in pesticide regulations occur constantly, and human errors are still possible. These recommendations are not a substitute for pesticide labeling. Please read the label before applying any pesticide.

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