

Weekly Berry Call – May 27, 2009

Participants: Laura McDermott (Eastern NY/Upper Hudson/Lower Adirondack) , Cathy Heidenreich (Western NY), Steven McKay (Lower Hudson Valley region: Columbia, Dutchess, Orange, Rensselaer and Ulster counties), Marvin Pritts (Finger Lakes region/Ithaca), Dale Riggs (Stephentown/Northern Hudson Valley).

GROWING CONDITIONS: (courtesy NY NASS)

Week ending May 24, 2009: The week began with a drying trend and rather cool temperatures for the middle of May as a cold front pushed through the region. Then the remainder of the week was dominated by high pressure and a return to seasonable temperatures. Those temperatures reached summer-like levels by the later half of the week with many locations climbing well into the 80's. By the weekend, another cold front provided the region with scattered showers and thunderstorms and a return to seasonable temperatures.

Broome County strawberries were in bloom and green berry stages. On Long Island, strawberry fields were spared from a possible frost, and the fruit load appeared to be one of the largest observed in several years.

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

Eastern NY Region

One inch rain Tuesday PM in Granville; no frost there. Scattered frosts in other areas.

Strawberries: South of Albany significant clipper damage; some TPB observed. Long Island reports they will begin picking next week.

Fingerlakes region/Ithaca area

Similar to other reports; nothing additional to add.

Lower Hudson Valley region:

Rain Tuesday PM.

Strawberries: Seascape and Annapolis showing red berries; picking begins this weekend.

Ribes: currant mildew observed.

Raspberries: pushing blossoms.

Blackberries: blackberry rust observed. There are now some effective fungicides available for help in managing this disease. For more information see call-in summary from 05/13/09.

Berkshire foothills/Stephentown, NY

Tuesday AM frost (29°); dewpoint dropped 7° in one hour. Pyganic seems to have halted HT raspberry damage mentioned in previous Berry Call; pest still not identified.

Strawberries: Early varieties full bloom; some fruit ripening next week (row covers); ice throughout canopy during frost protection, but little to no damage observed. First TPB application applied Friday 5/22.

Blueberries: early fruit set.

Raspberries: blossoms developing.

Western NY

Heavy frost early Monday Evening (9:30 PM) with temperatures at 30. One half inch rain overnight Tuesday into Wednesday.

Strawberries: full bloom to early fruit set. Root weevils observed in 1st fruiting year strawberries; avg 16 per 5 samples plant/soil. No apparent differences between varieties in terms of weevil populations.

Blueberries: early fruit set. Calls coming in across the state regarding off coloring of foliage – see photos/c0mments/discussion below.

Raspberries; flower buds beginning to open on early varieties.

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DISCUSSION:

Comments on Weeds: Question on the use of Prowl H2O in strawberries pre and post plant. See Strawberry herbicide update from Dr. Rich Bonanno, UMass Extension below:

Prowl H2O (pendimethalin) is registered in strawberries. Uniformly apply Prowl at a rate of 1.5 to 3 pints per acre to the soil surface PRE TRANSPLANT. Once the strawberries are established, an application may be made up to 35 days prior to harvest BETWEEN crops rows. DO NOT spray over strawberry plants. Application may cause stunting of daughter plants. Prowl provides excellent control of many annual grasses and several broadleaf species. See the label for a complete list of weeds. (Source: University of Maine Strawberry IPM Newsletter No. 1, May 22, 2009)

Comments on Diseases:

Powdery mildew of currant - Powdery mildew overwinters on currant twigs. Initially, white powdery patches of mycelium and spores appear on the leaves and shoots in early spring. As time passes, these patches turn rusty brown. Newly formed fruit also become infected, showing the same powdery lesions. Infected berries become cracked and may shatter. Infected leaves may drop prematurely during hot weather. Heavily infected plants appear stunted and may be killed by the disease.



Powdery mildew on black currant leaves



Mildew on gooseberry fruit

For more information on powdery mildew of currants: <http://plant-disease.ippc.orst.edu/disease.cfm?RecordID=512>

For disease management information: http://ipmguidelines.org/BerryCrops/content/CH06/CH06-2.asp#_Toc219695615

Comments on Insects:

Unidentified High Tunnel raspberry skeletonizer discussed in previous weeks of the Berry Call - remains unapprehended. Application of Pyganic seems to have arrested damage for the moment. One possible culprit may be Gypsy Moth. Similar feeding damage was observed last season on blueberries (photos below) and the pest identified from pupal cases...

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The elderberry borer noted in the 05/13/09 summary has been identified (thanks Steven and Greg) as Elder Shoot borer.

Elder Shoot Borer: *The larval stage of the elder shoot borer, Achatodes zae (Harris), is a worm that bores in the stems and shoots. The adult moth lays eggs in July and August in canes at least 1 year old. Eggs hatch the following April or May. The larvae feed first within the unfolding leaf whorls, then bore into new lateral shoots. When partially grown, they migrate to the ground shoots, entering these at the bases and feeding upwards into the shoots. When the larvae are fully grown in mid-June, they leave the ground shoots and tunnel into dead canes to pupate, leaving small piles of frass (sawdust) on the ground at the base of the old wood. To control, prune out infested shoots or canes. Eliminate dead canes to discourage pupation. Remove old canes with holes or with piles of frass at their bases. Destroy all prunings.* ♦ Courtesy of and adapted from the University of Wisconsin - on line at: <http://ssfruit.cas.psu.edu/82.htm>



Larva (Photo Courtesy of Purdue University)



Damaged shoot (Photo courtesy S. McKay)

Additional Comments:

Blueberries - A HSI (Horticultural Scene Investigation) seems to be unfolding with blueberries and calls have been coming in from Long Island to Western NY. Various possibilities have been discussed and an expert witness was called in from a neighboring state. Eric Hansen from Michigan State says he has seen similar symptoms resulting from cold soils and warm air temperatures, postulating roots can't keep up with nutrient demand – can't make sufficient chlorophyll fast enough for new plant growth. Marvin Pritts adds this has been the coldest April recorded in a 10 year period, followed by a very warm May with temperatures in the 90's on occasion. Plants should recover as soils warm. Stay tuned!

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What makes an early variety early? Or a late variety late? Is it simply bloom time or do some varieties take longer to develop after bloom than others? It's a combination of both traits. This phenomenon is more pronounced in blueberries than strawberries; breeders there are trying to get the latest blooming varieties crossed with the fastest maturing fruit after pollination for the best of both worlds.