

Weekly Berry Call – May 4, 2011

Participants: Laura McDermott (Eastern NY/Upper Hudson/Lower Adirondack), Molly Shaw (South Central/Southern Tier), Mariana Quartararo (Sullivan County/South of Catskills/NY-NJ border), Marvin Pritts (Finger Lakes region/Ithaca), Cathy Heidenreich (Finger Lakes/Western NY), Dale Riggs (Stephentown, Eastern NY), Sandy Menasha (Suffolk county LI), Amy Ivy (Clinton County, Northern NY), Kevin Schooley (Ottawa, Canada), Pam Fischer (Ontario, Simcoe, Canada), Sharon Bachman (Erie County), Kathy Demchak (by e-mail), The Pennsylvania State University).

Growing conditions: (courtesy NY NASS)

Week ending May 1, 2011: A mild, stormy and very wet week occurred across New York State. Mainly light precipitation fell across the state on Sunday as a frontal boundary stalled just south of the state. This boundary then lifted north as a warm front Tuesday into Wednesday bringing very mild temperatures with highs reaching the 80's in many areas but also very heavy rain and severe weather which lasted through Thursday when a cold front moved across the state with very strong winds behind the front across the western half of the state. Severe thunderstorms produced damaging winds and tornadoes across the state during the mid-week period and the heavy rain resulted in record flooding in some areas. Only the southeast corner of the state escaped the heavy rain and rainfall totals in those areas were generally less than half an inch. Drier and cooler weather prevailed on Friday and Saturday as high pressure moved into the state. Temperatures for the week averaged around 10 degrees above normal while precipitation averaged 2 to 4 times the normal rainfall for the week with the greatest amounts falling from the Great Lakes, Mohawk Valley and upper Hudson Valley Climatic Divisions northward.

Western NY – Erie County

Overcast and rainy. Strawberries are up – new leaves have pushed about 2”.

Canada – Ontario including Simcoe area to Ottawa

Terribly wet, ¼” green in blueberries in Ottawa. Has seen some spider mites on Evie-2 plants. West of Toronto – strawberries on plastic with row covers have begun blooming. Seen some white grubs and root weevil, also some cyclamen mite.

Finger Lakes/Western NY

Heavy rains, overcast, but GDD accumulation is average – but significantly behind last season.

Strawberries: Mulch off, new leaves pushing

Blueberries: bud break to tight cluster

Raspberries: ¼ to ½” green on summer varieties; fall raspberries 4 to 6”

Red and black currants: pink bud to grape

Gooseberries: pink bud to bloom

South Central/Southern Tier region

Wet conditions.

Sullivan County/South of Catskills/NY-NJ border

Cold, wet and windy.

Oneida County/Mohawk Valley Area

Lots of rain; flooding in many areas, cooler temperatures. Most fields too wet to even get on with any kind of equipment - spring planting delayed in all instances due to heavy rainfalls. Pruning still underway in many areas as snow melt was late, causing a delay in getting started. Heavy snow loads this winter also caused a great deal of winter damage (cane breakage) in blueberry plantings.

Strawberries: just starting to push new leaves.

Blueberries: bud break to tight cluster.

Raspberries: ¼ to ½” green on summer varieties; fall raspberries 4 to 6”

Red and black currants: pink bud to grape

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Northern NY

Very wet. Not as much winter injury on blueberries as anticipated despite temperatures in the minus 20°F. New variety of Reka for blueberries seems well received and did not suffer winter injury.

Eastern NY Region

Wide variety of phenologies across the region. Weather has been very wet – near record or record flooding in Lake Champlain and Hudson and Mohawk rivers. Snow pack remains in upper Adirondack Mountains, so flooding will remain a problem for some weeks.

Blueberries: ranging from very beginning of bloom to barely bud swell.

Strawberries: Berries on plastic and under row cover have begun to bloom. Matted row berries are just pushing new growth. Day-neutral berries in High Tunnel are in full bloom.

Raspberries: pink stage, canes emerging from ground.

Long Island/Suffolk County

Cool and wet, but because of their sandy soil, rain again would be helpful. Strawberries at early bloom. 1st nymphs of TPB and just a couple of clippers seen this week. Disease is at a minimum.

Pennsylvania

Quick update - in PA it's been cold, wet and miserable most days. Everything's delayed. We'll be monitoring for spotted wing drosophila down here in the strawberries at about 10 sites, just so we know.... Has anyone tried releasing predatory mites for cyclamen mite management? I'll be trying that....

Special guest topic: Scouting Strawberry Fields

Sandy Menasha gave the group an idea of how she scouts for insect pests. This is a fee based program for growers in her county. The service begins in May and usually goes to the end of harvest, which lasts 8-10 weeks. She scouts each farm once a week. All this for \$150/grower/season. She currently has 5 growers signed up. She scouts a 2x2 quadrant and looks for spider mites, TPB nymphs, spittle bug masses and clipper.

- For spider mites, she examines 60 leaves – if 15/60 leaves are infested, that is the action threshold.
- For TPB – tap trusses of flowers and keep track of number of nymphs and adults. 4 infested trusses out of 10 trusses examined will indicate treatment. This threshold seemed too low to some of the folks on the call. That would indicate 40% infestation and if they were all nymphs, the population could go crazy in short order.
- Clipper damage at 1 cut bud per linear foot. Research conducted in the last few years suggests that plants can sustain many times this pressure without much yield reduction if clipping occurs on tertiary or quaternary flower buds. The new threshold is more than one primary or secondary flower bud or more than two tertiary flower buds per truss, or more than one injured truss per foot of row. Cultivar also seems to make a difference in yield reduction from clipper damage.
- Sandy takes visual assessment of leaf scorch and leaf spot making note of these diseases each week.
- Spittle bug masses are also counted, despite the fact that the growers are unconcerned about them.
- There is a lot of variation for pest pressure between farms and even between fields on farms – this despite the rather close geographical proximity of farms on LI.
- These scouting methods were loosely based on NYS IPM protocol. That protocol has been incorporated into the Cornell Berry Pest Management Guidelines.
<http://ipmguidelines.org/BerryCrops/default.asp>.
- The value of a predictive yield assessment was discussed. There are a number of papers that talk about yield assessment in relation to damage done to berry crops, and a few used for scoring potential berry varieties in a breeding program. Dale Riggs described her method as counting the number of trusses and berries on that truss in a sq. ft. quadrant and trying to make a relative prediction for varieties. Certainly if you counted 30 days from full bloom you could at least give a reasonably sound prediction of peak harvest.

Discussion following dealt mostly with future topics for invited speakers. Root weevil, berry nutrition, blueberry weed control were among the topics mentioned.

Weekly Berry Call – May 4, 2011



Photo of Chandler leaves with slug damage, most likely from last fall. New emerging leaves also suffered damage so the organic grower used Sluggo, which he applied carefully around the plants under the plastic. This seems to have done the trick.



Blueberry cane breakage and bending from heavy snow loads, Oneida County, NY



Top: Strawberry Clipper damage. Below: Tarnished Plant Bug nymph



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Weather Data for Week Ending Sunday, May 1, 2011

Station	Temperature (°F)				Growing Degree Days Base 50° ^{1/}			Precipitation (Inches) ^{1/}			
	High	Low	Avg	Dep. from Norm	Week	Season	Dep. from Norm	Week	Dep. from Norm	Season	Dep. from Norm
<u>Hudson Valley</u>											
Albany	84	37	59	+9	67	100	+62	1.29	+0.59	4.66	+1.57
Glens Falls	80	35	56	+8	46	70	+46	2.20	+1.46	4.77	+1.68
Poughkeepsie	84	37	62	+11	88	129	+76	0.47	-0.43	4.81	+1.19
<u>Mohawk Valley</u>											
Boonville	75	35	52	+7	32	38	+20	4.10	+3.05	9.17	+4.39
<u>Champlain Valley</u>											
Plattsburgh	78	32	55	+7	40	51	+25	2.62	+1.95	5.63	+2.74
<u>St. Lawrence Valley</u>											
Canton	76	34	52	+5	27	33	+13	2.40	+1.70	6.24	+3.29
Massena	77	34	54	+7	34	55	+31	1.12	+0.51	5.24	+2.51
<u>Great Lakes</u>											
Buffalo	82	38	57	+7	56	92	+56	1.62	+0.92	5.74	+2.77
Wales	82	35	54	+7	40	61	+40	2.00	+1.16	6.44	+2.55
Niagara Falls	82	35	55	+5	44	77	+36	1.30	+0.60	5.13	+1.88
Rochester	81	37	55	+5	46	86	+43	1.53	+0.90	5.69	+2.99
Watertown	83	31	53	+5	42	63	+40	1.73	+1.11	5.56	+2.96
<u>Central Lakes</u>											
Dansville	84	41	58	+9	61	106	+68	1.25	+0.59	4.50	+1.60
Geneva	79	41	55	+6	44	69	+36	2.35	+1.65	6.43	+3.42
Honeoye	80	38	56	+7	48	79	+45	1.43	+0.74	5.43	+2.39
Ithaca	83	37	56	+8	52	72	+46	2.21	+1.51	7.31	+4.30
Penn Yan	81	39	56	+7	49	81	+48	2.50	+1.80	5.76	+2.75
Syracuse	82	41	59	+9	65	112	+71	3.49	+2.72	8.57	+5.13
Warsaw	79	34	53	+7	37	50	+34	1.41	+0.64	6.59	+3.11
<u>Western Plateau</u>											
Angelica	80	38	55	+9	45	65	+50	2.20	+1.57	7.29	+4.43
Elmira	83	36	57	+8	50	81	+51	3.19	+2.53	6.64	+3.86
Franklinville	80	38	53	+8	32	51	+40	1.03	+0.26	6.03	+2.64
Jamestown	81	33	54	+8	40	66	+47	0.89	-0.01	6.25	+2.30
<u>Eastern Plateau</u>											
Binghamton	81	40	57	+8	55	73	+46	3.84	+3.07	8.56	+5.32
Cobleskill	80	35	55	+8	41	52	+29	2.63	+1.86	5.74	+2.34
Morrisville	79	38	55	+7	44	51	+32	1.86	+1.09	7.65	+4.45
Norwich	83	35	55	+8	46	65	+41	2.71	+1.88	7.59	+4.11
Oneonta	83	35	56	+9	44	59	40	3.38	+2.49	7.77	+4.16
<u>Coastal</u>											
Bridgehamton	75	41	59	+9	62	75	+50	0.29	-0.62	2.94	-1.16
New York	80	50	62	+7	88	147	+53	0.64	-0.27	5.13	+1.21

^{1/} Season accumulations are for April 1st to date. Weekly accumulations are through 7:00 AM Sunday Morning. Data courtesy NY NASS.