

Healthy Fruit

Volume 13, 2005

Prepared by the University of Massachusetts Fruit Team

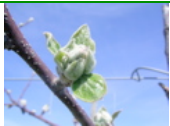




Issue 3, April 19, 2005

Current DD Accumulations

Location	Base 32F	Base 43F	Base 50F
Belchertown, UMass CSO observed (01/01/05 – 04/18/05)	--	170	75
Belchertown, SkyBit E-Weather (01/01/05 – 04/18/05)	--	144	--
Belchertown, UMass CSO observed (04/15/05 – 04/18/05)	79 (2*)	--	--
Belchertown, SkyBit E-Weather (04/15/05 – 04/18/05)	--	--	--

• % mature spores

Current Bud Stages

Location	McIntosh apple	Honeycrisp apple	Pear	Peach	Cavalier sweet cherry
Belchertown UMass CSO (04/18/05)					
	half-inch green +	half-inch green	early bud burst	half-inch green	swollen bud to early bud burst

Current bud stages also available on UMass Fruit Advisor, <http://www.umass.edu/fruitadvisor/>

Upcoming Meetings/Events

Date	Meeting/Event	Location	Time	Information
May 10	Fruit Team Twilight Meeting	Pine Hill Orchard, Shelburne, MA	5:30 PM	Jon Clements 413-478-7219
April 12	Fruit Team Twilight Meeting	Tougas Family Farm, Northboro, MA	5:30 PM	Jon Clements 413-478-7219

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The way I see it

Warm, dry weather has moved bud stages along rapidly. I can find some pink showing in peaches at Belchertown, and we will be at tight-cluster mid-week in apples if the forecast holds. On Monday afternoon, apricots were partially in bloom. Tarnished plant bug was observed on apple buds. Oil should be going on this week along with a fungicide to prepare for the prolonged period of wetting forecast for this weekend. It's been great weather recently to get trees in the ground. It's hard to believe we went from 2 feet of snow, to very wet ground, to this dry, warm spell in just a month. I hope everyone is keeping up – before you know it, we'll be in bloom! J. Clements

Peach flower bud injury

Not to be alarmist, but I am seeing more peach flower bud injury than I'd like to. Most likely this is a result of January low temperature(s) of -12 to -14 F. that came on the heels of temperatures near 60 F. the week before. (<http://www.umass.edu/fruitadvisor/hrcweather/index.html>) I've heard reports of few live flower buds on some cultivars and locations as far south as the Hudson Valley and New Jersey. As with last year, there are probably enough live buds for a good peach crop, but some cultivars and young trees may end up with little if anything. You may want to adjust your pruning and fertilizer application depending on the final crop load of your peaches. For example, it's easier to reduce the height of trees with little or no crop, and reduce the amount of nitrogen applied to trees with light crops to prevent excessive growth. J. Clements

TPB: out of the woodwork

The first very warm days that coincide with apple buds showing are sure to turn up tarnished plant bug (TPB). You will find them nervously moving (flying) from bud to bud. Or, you can hang white sticky traps at knee-height to monitor. Growers with a history of TPB damage in apples and peaches should pay attention, in which case a pink insecticide spray (for both apples and peaches) may be warranted. Unfortunately, Imidan or Guthion are relatively ineffective. Pyrethroids (Ambush, Pounce, Asana, Warrior) are best. Actara, Danitol, Assail, and Calypso are good, and may fit an IPM program best. J. Clements

Planting trees?

It's been a good (dry) week to get trees in the ground. If you are still planting, a few things to keep in mind:

- Plant early. You will get more growth during that first growing season, and roots like to grow in cool soil.
- Apple graft unions should be 2-4" above ground. Remember, with deeper planting depth, a more vigorous tree will result. Do not plant too deep! Peach graft unions should be at ground level.
- Whips should be headed at waste height immediately after planting. Trees have 1 or 2 feathers (branches)? Remove and treat like a whip. 3 or more good feathers? Trim back by 2/3, and then head the leader app. 18-24 inches above the feathers. Remove any feathers that are 50% or more the diameter of the leader where they originate! Then go from there.
- Support trees on dwarf rootstocks as soon as possible after planting.
- Fertilize lightly with calcium nitrate when trees start to grow (2-3 weeks after planting).

J. Clements

They Don't Get Scab in the Desert

As long as it's dry, there is no chance of scab. But when it does rain, the risk of scab infection will be relatively high this season. Continued dry, warm weather will push the growth of new green leaves, perhaps up into the range of tight cluster. At the same time, the warmth will increase the number of mature ascospores available when it does rain. Last week we recommended an application of a protectant fungicide before the first rain, and as we advance, the need becomes greater. More green tissue plus more mature spores equals more risk. Cover before the next predicted rain. D. Cooley

Watch Out for Phytotox!

Copper fungicides are an excellent way to reduce bacterial inoculum in apples, peaches and other tree fruit. However, as we get more green tissue, the chance of phytotoxicity increases. Optimal timing for copper applications is just before bud break. After that, rates should be reduced to about half (1 lb. of metallic copper per acre). One potential problem this year is that full rates of copper (2 to 2.5 lbs. metallic copper per acre) put on just before bud break are still sitting there, because it never rained. That means that the first rain could release relatively high rates of copper on new leaves.

Peaches can be particularly sensitive to copper. The rapid release of high rates of copper might result in some yellowing and defoliation, but trees will recover. D. Cooley

Better Late than Never for Leaf Curl

Peach leaf curl infects peach leaves before or just as the buds are opening. The best time to treat for leaf curl is, naturally enough, just before bud break. However, if you missed the timing on the leaf curl spray, applications after bud break can reduce the disease. To avoid copper phytotoxicity issues, consider using Bravo, Ferbam (Carbamate) or Ziram. D. Cooley