



# Healthy Fruit

Volume 10, 2002

Prepared by the University of Massachusetts Fruit Team

## Issue 5 - April 30, 2002

### Current DD Accumulations

Location	32	43	50
Belchertown	-	348	185
UMass Cold Spring Orchard (CSO) (01/01/02 – 04/29/02)			
(04/04/02 – 04/29/02, 04/04 Green Tip date)	458	-	-

### Current Bud Stages

Location	McIntosh Apple	Gala Apple	Pear	Peach	Sweet Cherry	Plum
Belchertown	Early – Mid	Late	Mid-	Petal Fall	Petal Fall	Petal Fall
UMass CSO (04/29/02)	Bloom	Pink – King Bloom	Petal Fall	+	+	+

### Upcoming Meetings/Events

Date	Meeting/Event	Location	Time	Information
May 14	Fruit Team Twilight Meeting	Parlee Farms 95 Farwell Rd. Tyngsboro, MA	5:30 PM	Jon Clements 413-478-7219 or Sonia Schloemann 413-545-4347
May 15	Fruit Team Twilight Meeting	West Parish Orchard 1780 Granville Rd. Westfield, MA 01085	5:30 PM	Jon Clements 413-478-7219
May 16	Fruit Team Twilight Meeting	Bernie Smith 359 Sawmill Rd. N. Scituate, RI 02857	5:30 PM	Heather Faubert 401-874-2750 or Jon Clements 413-478-7219

### Urea Spray May Mean More Fruit

We are now enduring an extended, cold, and rainy bloom period in most Massachusetts orchards. Bud stage ranges from pink to bloom across the State. We've received several pictures of snow on the ground and in apple trees with pink to open bloom. Low temperatures in the past week have hovered in the upper 20's, an indication we may

have some bud damage. Pollination weather has been less than ideal too. Thus, a urea spray during this stressful time (on both trees and growers!) may be beneficial. According to Dr. Jim Schupp of Cornell's Hudson Valley Lab, "the application of urea at 3 pounds per 100 gal. may help increase the number of fruit that stay on the tree." Be sure to use spray grade urea, and you may tank-mix it with a timely fungicide application.

## ***In This Case, Beheaded is Not Such a Bad Thing...***

A reminder, that in general, apple trees should be headed at planting if a central-leader (including slender-spindle and vertical-axis) tree form is desired. Heading will promote vigorous branch growth in the vicinity of the cut. These branches will become the lower scaffold branches. There are a few rules to follow when deciding when/where/how to head: 1.) 'whips' should always be headed at roughly waist height; 2.) if the tree has one or two 'feathers,' they should be removed and the tree headed at waist height; 3.) if the tree has three or more feathers, leave them (unless they are more than 1/3 the diameter of the leader from which they originate, in which case remove them) and head the tree app. 18 to 24 inches above the feathers. After heading, we'll strip – more on that later.

## ***Plant Bugs***

There hasn't been much additional insect activity this past week - rather un-surprisingly. Cumulative plant bug trap captures range from less than one per trap, to over the threshold of 8 per trap, with most orchards averaging below the threshold. With trees coming into bloom in most areas, it will not be possible to apply an insecticide for plant bug where captures are above threshold, but it may be advisable to be very prompt with the petal-fall insecticide if much bug activity has been seen and no pre-bloom insecticide was applied.

## ***Leafminers***

Flight appears to have peaked in earlier-developing areas, but a few more warm days will tell us for sure whether this insect will be a problem. Most monitored orchards are below treatment threshold; some individual trap captures of 50 or more have been seen, but this does not appear to be the overall pattern.

## ***Pear Thrips***

Very little pear thrips activity has been seen in monitored orchards, but keep an eye out for these insects, which can create a problem when the pre-bloom period is long and drawn-out, as it seems to be this year.