

Small Fruit Update



Providing Northwest berry growers with the information they need when they need it.

The Small Fruit Update is sent out weekly during the growing season by [Peerbolt Crop Management](#) and is funded entirely by the Northwest berry growers & industry through their commissions & councils.

February 21, 2012

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Featured:

One story, two write-ups...

1. [Multnomah County jury grants \\$40 million award to farmers whose nursery crops were destroyed by fertilizer](#) (2/16, Oregonian)
2. [Aldergrove blueberry nursery owner awarded \\$36 million over defective fertilizer](#) (2/16, The Vancouver Sun)

[British Columbia Berry Grower Magazine](#) (Spring, 2012)

[The Weather Cafe](#) by Rufus La Lone [Small Fruit Cold Storage Report](#)

The February-March period presents our berry crops with some specific risks related to plant development and weather extremes. Check out Rufus's forecast (click on [The Weather Café](#) link above) for the latest potential 'challenge'. **We could be in for some very cold weather in the next few weeks.** So far this spring has remained cool and wet, with plant development not pushed to the point of being too sensitive to cold. But it won't take much for blueberries to be into green tip stage and caneberries into breaking buds where they'd all be much more vulnerable. May or may not happen but...be prepared. Thanks, Rufus, for the straight, reliable (and free!) weather information. Many in our industry have come to rely on your reports.

Reminders:

- The deadline for Spartan herbicide applications on strawberries is February 29th.
- Zinc phosphide rodent baits can't be legally applied after bud break.
- Blueberry plants become vulnerable to mummyberry infections at green tip stage (1/8" new growth on vegetative buds).

Tom Peerbolt

Regional Reports

These reports are from individuals within the region and are their particular observations. They are included to give an impression of the present 'state of the industry' and regional activities.

British Columbia, Fraser Valley

- **Blueberries: (Monday, 2/20)** Continuing on with pruning in the blues, some early herbicide work and some lime sulphur sprays. Bud movement seems to have slowed down a bit with cooler nights and mornings. Soil temps around 4.5 - 5 degrees C(40-41 F) so root activity should be pretty low for the

Disseminating information for:

Washington

[Washington Red Raspberry Commission](#)
[Washington Blueberry Commission](#)
[Washington Strawberry Commission](#)

Oregon

[Oregon Raspberry and Blackberry Commission](#)
[Oregon Blueberry Commission](#)
[Oregon Strawberry Commission](#)

British Columbia

[Fraser Valley Strawberry Growers Association](#)
[Raspberry Industry Development Council](#)
[B.C. Blueberry Council](#)

National

[North American Blueberry Council](#)

present time. Still worrisome with the bud development where it is and the potential of a return to winter conditions as per last season. I think that's in the back of everyone's mind.

- **Raspberries: (Monday, 2/20)** In the raspberries there is some bud swell and elongation to green tip in the upper cane area of Chemainus and Malahat especially where the cane tips have been pruned. Meekers still pretty tight for most of the cane length. Could start some lime sulphur in fields that are pushing. But still some pruning out to do. It's hard to generate a lot of excitement for field activities in raspberries at present.

Northern Washington, Whatcom County

- **Blueberries, raspberries:** (Tuesday, February 21) Cool and wet, hope Rufus is wrong about colder weather coming. Getting into tying new raspberry fields, finishing copper on the blueberries after pruning. May start pre-emergence herbicides in the blues if the ground firms up and the wind stops.

Northern Washington, Skagit County

- **Blueberries, blackberries & strawberries:** (Friday, February 17) No winter damage evident this year so far. Night temps that have been in the low-mid 40's have buds pushing, particularly in the Chester and Black Diamond blackberries. We're still spraying copper behind the pruners in blueberries, and putting on Spartan herbicide in the strawberries when we can get in the field.

Here's a photo of our propane burner in some chickweed in the organic blocks—Smells like..... Victory!!



Photos by Charley Anderson

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Late Winter/Early Spring Weather Risks

- Just as a reminder of what can happen at this time of year, the temperatures below are from last year (2011).
- While there wasn't region wide damage, there was very serious damage in some Skagit county blackberry & blueberry fields.
- One of the fieldmen reports the following local weather factors that led to that damage:
 - Ø In Skagit last year the plants came into late fall (2010) really green. We were still picking Elliott blueberries and Chester blackberries in November.
 - Ø The freeze at the end of November (2010) probably did more damage than we realized at the time.
 - Ø Around Jan 15th (2011) we had a week of daytime temps in the mid-50's.
 - Ø At 3 am on Feb 25th it had dropped to 17 deg F, absolutely clear with no wind. By 3:30am it had dropped to 0 deg F and reached a low of -4 deg F in our lowest fields (about 3' below sea level).
 - Ø We ran wind machines & smudge pots but there was no warmer inversion layer to bring down.
 - Ø Damage was variable in different parts of Skagit Valley.

2011's Record Cold Event of Feb. 25 & 26

Last year's minimum temperatures and wind speeds from selected regional weather stations. Individual grower reports reported lower temperatures especially in outlying areas.

Location	2-25-11	2-26-11
<i>Reported in Fahrenheit. Wind speed and wind gust speed in parenthesis.</i>		
Corvallis, OR	24 (11G18)	19 (2G03)
Salem, OR (McNary)	24 (6)	18 (7)
Aurora, OR	24 (5G12)	19 (1G2)
Forest Grove, OR	23 (3G5)	19 (G1)
Vancouver, WA	25 (Calm)	17 (Calm)
Kelso-Longview, WA	18 (Calm)	16 (Calm)
Mt. Vernon, WA	17 (7)	19 (Calm)
Bellingham Airport, WA	17 (17G25)	19 (Calm)
Abbotsford, B.C.	16 (14G21)	19 (Calm)
Prosser, WA	5 (3G6)	3 (3G6)

Pictorial blueberry growth stages with temperature damage thresholds

- [Click here](#) for a PDF of this chart from Michigan State.
- The relevant stages & temperature thresholds from the chart:
 - **Bud Swell:** "Visible swelling of buds; scales separated. Can tolerate 10-15 (F)".
 - **Bud break:** "Bud scales separated, tips of flowers visible. Can tolerate 15-20 (F)".
 - **Tight cluster:** "Individual flowers distinguishable. Can tolerate 20-25 (F)".

Blueberry Early Spring Weather Management Information (2nd week)

- [Using your sprinkler system to protect blueberries from freezes](#) (Eric Hansen, Michigan State Small Fruit Specialist)
- [Critical Spring Temperatures for Tree Fruit and Small Fruit Bud Stages](#) (Mark Longstroth, Michigan State)
- [Frost protection: Tips & Techniques](#) (Kathy Demchek, Penn State)
- [Frost & freeze protection: Blueberries](#) (www.eXtension.org)

Classifieds

Peerbolt Crop Management Field Services for 2012

We're in the process of planning our field season and beginning scout hiring. Anyone who didn't work with us in 2011 & might be interested in contracting for field services this coming season, please contact us soon. Once the scouts are hired & trained our ability to add new field work is limited.

Field services offered:

- **Field scouting/monitoring:** Weekly or every other week field monitoring for pests & diseases. Field specific reports with recommendations are emailed and saved online for quick & easy grower access.
- **Scouting/monitoring for Spotted Wing Drosophila:** Field monitoring specifically for SWD.
- **Certified third party monitoring for blueberry export to Korea:** These pest monitoring protocols require third party pest consultant certification.
- **Custom services:** We can talk with you about adapting our scouting & online reporting resources to meet whatever your specific field management needs might be.

Please call 503-289-7287 or [email](#) for more information or [click here](#) to go to our business website.

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Exporting to Korea for Oregon Blueberry Growers & Packers (2nd week)

New information:

- **Deadline for packers to register & sign compliance agreements: March 1st.**
- **Deadline for all production fields to be registered: March 15th.**

The Oregon Blueberry Commission has set up a website materials and resources relating to Korean Export program.

- [Click here](#) to go to the site.
- [Click here](#) for a copy of registration materials needed for those interested in shipping fresh blueberries to Korea this year.
- Questions or comments can be directed to Bryan Ostlund at the commission office: 503-364-2944; Email: bryan@ostlund.com.

Pest Management Materials Update

Information on all the new fumigant use rules

- [Fumigant Management Primers](#) (Growing Produce 2/20)
- [Soil Fumigant Toolbox](#) *The EPA's main information website.*
- [Agrian's Fumigant Management Plan](#) *An industry sponsored website.*

Pest Management & IPM

Vertebrates

- **Voles:** Vole activity is apparent in many blueberry, caneberry, and strawberry fields. Management of voles is most effective in the spring before they start multiplying like...voles. Kind of like weeds—get them before their reproduction cycle kicks in! [Click here](#) for some background and biology information on voles (or meadow mice). [Click here](#) for information on how to construct bait stations.
- **Birds, blueberries. Starling management:** Right now starlings are beginning to fledge. Population control becomes very difficult later into the season because they multiply rapidly. This is a major pest species that needs year round management attention.
 - [Click here](#) for a starling fact sheet.
 - [Click here](#) for a starling nesting fact sheet.
 - [Click here](#) for the Okanagan (B.C.) grape grower starling trapping 2010 program synopsis. This is a well documented and well run starling management plan.

Diseases

- **[Pseudomonas \(Bacterial Blight\)](#) blueberries:** Water-soaked lesions can appear at this time of year on canes that then develop into reddish brown to black cankers. Cankers may extend from a fraction of an inch to the entire length of 1-year-old wood. Buds in cankers die. If girdled, the cane portion above the canker dies.

Insects/Mites

- **[Winter Moth/ Bruce Span Worm](#) blueberries:** Scouting for winter moth larvae should start as soon as the buds start swelling. We've had reports in previous years of problems beginning this early but it's usually in a couple of weeks. More of an ongoing issue in the northern growing regions but also an occasional, locally severe problem in some Oregon and SW Washington fields.
- **[Scale](#) blueberries:** A dormant oil or Esteem (pyriproxyfen) can be used while blueberries are dormant.

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Industry News/Resources

Newsletters

- [B.C. IPM Newsletter](#) (2/20)
- [Michigan State Fruit News](#) (2/17)
- 'The Source' (2/15) *Market updates from The Produce News.*

Food Safety website

- (Canada) [On-Farm food safety manuals updated for 2012](#) (2/13, Fruit & Vegetable)
 - [Canada Gap Website](#) *A great resource for Canadian growers on their food safety plans.*

- [FDA relies on food facilities to pay for implementing new food-safety law](#) (2/14, Produce News)

Magazine compilations

- The Packer's Market scope: [blueberries](#) [blackberries](#) [raspberries](#) [strawberries](#)
Recent stories & fresh market pricing for the various berries from The Packer.
- Growing Produce: [Recent Berry Articles](#)

Labor/Immigration

- [GOP candidates sputter over labor solutions](#) (2/17, The Packer)

Research/Breeding

- [Pure Fresh introduces sweeter blackberry](#) (2/15, The Packer)
- (CA Strawberries) [Growers test benicia variety, focus on proprietary types](#) (2/10, The Packer)

West

- [Market 52 files for bankruptcy](#) (2/14, The Packer)

National

- [Weekend freeze damages Florida, Georgia blueberries](#) (2/16, The Packer)
- [Fresh produce imports & exports surge in 2011](#) (2/16, The Packer)
- [Politics stall request for blackberry promotion](#) (2/3, The Packer)

International

- [2012 Fruit Logistica draws over 56,000 visitors](#) (2/17, Produce News)
- [Chile: Rain affects blueberry harvest](#) (2/17, FreshPlaza)

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Event Calendar

- For more comprehensive event calendar, [click here](#).
- **February 27 - March 2 — North American Blueberry Council & US Highbush Blueberry Council Spring Meetings** ~ Sheraton Fisherman's Wharf, San Francisco, CA. February 27 NABC Napa Valley Wine Tour. February 28 USHBC Strategic Planning Meeting. February 29 USHBC and NABC meetings. March 1 & 2 USHC meetings. [Click here for the schedule and registration information](#). For more information contact Mary Nezbeth 916-983-2279.
- **March 7 — ORBC Production Raspberry & Blackberry Workshop** ~ 8:30-3:30, [Click here for the agenda](#), contact Peerbolt Crop Management by [email](#) or phone 503-289-7287 to RSVP.
- **March 13 — Oregon Blueberry Commission meeting** ~ 12-noon, regular meeting at Roth's Salem location. Call (503) 364-2944 for more information or [email](#) Brian Ostlund.
- **March 16 — Oregon Raspberry & Blackberry Commission meeting** ~ Langdon Farms Golf Club. For more information, call 541-758-4043 or [email](#) Philip Gutt.
- **March 20 — Oregon Strawberry Commission meeting** ~ Noon, Roth's West. 1130 Wallace Rd NW, Salem OR. For more information, call 541-758-4043 or [email](#) Philip Gutt.

Crop work

All crops:

- Scout for voles and treat as needed.
- Weed management.

Blueberries

- Pruning—finish up as soon as possible.
- Scout for winter moth/span worm and treat as needed.
- Scout for bud damage & determine cause.
- Dormant oil can be applied for scale and winter moth egg control.
- Can apply Casoron (dichlobenil) or Chateau for weed control.

Blackberries

- Can apply Casoron (dichlobenil) for weed control. Especially good on quackgrass.

Evergreen Blackberries

- Can apply a dormant spray of lime/sulfur or elemental sulfur in mid-February for Redberry mites.

Raspberries

- Can apply Casoron (dichlobenil) for weed control. Especially good on quackgrass.

Strawberries

- Can apply pre-emergent herbicides. Spartan (Sulfentrazone) needs to go on before the end of February.

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Archived Small Fruit Updates

(For older Updates [click here](#).)

[02-14-12](#)

[01-10-12](#)

[12-15-11](#)