

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 and industry through their commissions and councils.

March 13, 2013

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We're into a critical period in mummyberry disease management in blueberries as the main disease infection factors are coming together. Most fields are at or beyond green tip stage; temperatures are between 45 and 60 degrees and, in many of our growing areas, leaf wetness periods could be long and sustained. This can be a difficult time to get and keep the preventative fungicides in place on that vulnerable tissue but if it isn't done now you could be dealing with the consequences during harvest with infected fruit.

This past week has seen only slow plant development. With the night temperatures now rising, that pace will speed up which, in terms of mummyberry, means more unprotected, vulnerable tissue.

Tom Peerbolt, SFU Editor

Regional Crop Information

Disease Alert

Mummyberry (blueberries)- Time to be in prevention mode! In fields with a history of mummyberry and at green tip or beyond stage now's the time to be implementing your management program and keep it going as consistently as possible all the way through the end of bloom.

- **So, what is "green tip stage"?** [Click here](#) for a chart from Michigan State of the various stages of blueberry growth development.

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](#)

- [Mummyberry primer from MSU](#)

- **Some critical points:**

- The optimum temperature for spore release and infection is 50 to 57°F (10 to 14°C). Figure on when temperatures go over 45F in our area you're into the danger zone.
- At least 12 hours of wetness is required for infection.

Frost may increase susceptibility of blueberry shoots to infection.

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 (Monday, 3/11)

- **Blueberries:** Just waiting for the next system to roll in with lots of moisture promised for the week. A bit of Mummyberry spraying went on in the west end of the valley late last week and weekend. But for the most part I think we will start in earnest by the end of this week on most varieties. Lots of herbicide work going on in blues and raspberries.
- **Raspberries:** Lime sulphur still going on raspberries. We should see a push on raspberries this week if the rains we get are mixed with mild weather. Last week's nights were pretty cool with good frosts on a couple of early mornings.

Whatcom County, Northern Washington

- **Blueberries & raspberries:** (Thursday, 3/7) Tying baby raspberry as fast as possible. Hope Rufus is wrong about the coming cold snap. Lows in the 30's and highs around 50 here, with showers often, yuck. Raspberry and blueberry buds popping, just two weeks later than the southern folks. Not much field work under way. Blueberry herbicides the main work right now. Lots of voles in the blues. Planning our starling management strategy.

Willamette Valley, Oregon and SW Washington

- **Blueberries:** (Thursday, 3/7) Well, the early breaking blueberry varieties are out and we have been running frost fans to keep them warm. It's gotten down to 25 degrees last week and 26-27 this week. Looks like cold temps still in the forecast for the next couple of weeks. Fungicide sprays going on and trying to come up with a good strategy for mummy berry. Not a lot of good options for mummy berry for organic growers.

Late Winter/Early Spring Weather Risks

Pictorial blueberry growth stages with temperature damage thresholds

- [Blueberry growth stages and critical spring temperatures](#) (Michigan State Extension)
- The relevant stages & temperature thresholds from the chart:
 - **Bud Swell:** "Visible swelling of buds; scales separated. Can tolerate 10-15 F (-12 to -9 C)".
 - **Tight cluster:** "Individual flowers distinguishable. Can tolerate 20-23 F (-7 to -5 C)".

Early Spring Weather Management Information

- [Using your sprinkler system to protect blueberries from freezes](#) (Eric Hansen, Michigan State Small Fruit Specialist)

(All berries) [Frost protection: Tips & Techniques](#) (Kathy Demchek, Penn State)

Blueberry Nutrient Management

We're getting into a traditional time for applying fertilizer. Many growers still apply the first blueberry application just before the buds break. Research has shown that the plant takes up very little nitrogen before late April. Recommended timing for split applications in the Willamette Valley is 1/3 in late April, 1/3 in mid-May and 1/3 in mid-June.

[Click here](#) For OSU's "Nutrient Management in Blueberries" (16 page pdf).

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Food Safety Events

Washington Food Safety Training Offered

by the Washington Blueberry & Red Raspberry commissions

- [Click here](#) for a detailed information sheet.
- Class is free of charge but RSVP is required.
- **Dates & Locations:**
 - **March 19** WSU-IAREC – 24106 N. Bunn Road, Prosser
 - **March 20** WSU-Clark County Extension – 1919 NE 78th St., Vancouver, WA
 - **March 27** WSU-NWREC – 16650 Highway 536, Mt. Vernon
 - **March 28** NW WA Fairgrounds, Rotary Building – 1775 Front Street, Lynden
- Buyers of Washington berries and berry products are increasingly requiring growers be third party certified to meet minimum requirements for food safety.
- The minimum standard for this is GAP (Good Agricultural Practices).
- It is very likely that new federal legislation will require growers to implement these standards soon.
- In order to help you meet these new standards the Washington Blueberry and Red Raspberry commissions will host a series of food safety meetings around the state.
- The training will have capabilities for a Spanish translation for employees and Punjabi at the Lynden location.

Oregon Food Safety Training Offered

by the Oregon Raspberry & Blackberry, Blueberry, and Strawberry commissions

- [Click here](#) for the website with registration and detailed information.
- Class is free of charge but RSVP is required.
- **Dates & locations:**
 - **April 4** North Willamette Research Extension Center – 15210 NE Miley Rd., Aurora
 - **April 9** Unger Farm Store – 34880 SW Johnson School Rd, Cornelius
 - **April 18** Woodburn Fertilizer – 868 N Front Street, Woodburn
 - **April 23** Scenic Fruit Co. – 7510 SE Altman Rd., Gresham
 - **May 2** Riverbend Organic Farm – 35711 Helms Dr., Jefferson
 - **May 7** Willamette Valley Fruit Co. – 2994 82nd Ave NE, Salem
 - **May 16** HBF International – 310 NE Kirby St, McMinnville
 - **May 21** Western Star Grange Hall #309 – 30423 Tangent Dr., Albany

FDA Informational Workshops on the Proposed FSMA Rules

The Food Safety Modernization Act will significantly impact growers, packers and processors in the coming years. Members of the food industry have the opportunity to submit comments to FDA on the proposed rules that will be used to regulate the food industry in the coming years. There is a need to be familiar with the proposed rules in order to submit relevant comments to FDA by the May 16, 2013 deadline. A multi-state team involving universities and regulatory agencies in partnership with FDA is offering five opportunities to review the proposed rules. FDA will be presenting information and offering input throughout the workshop.”

- [Click here](#) for the flyer with more details on the meetings.
- Cost is \$20 with a registration cutoff date of 4 days prior to the meeting date.
- **Dates & locations:**
 - **March 14** North Willamette Research Extension Center, Aurora, OR
 - **March 15** Holiday Inn Downtown Yakima, Yakima, WA
 - **April 15** WSU Snohomish County Extension, Everett, WA
 - **April 17** Unitarian Universalist Church, Eugene, OR
 - **April 19** Four Rivers Cultural Center, Ontario, OR

FDA Public Hearing in Portland on Food Safety Modernization Act

- **March 27** — 8:30-5:00, Crown Plaza, Downtown Portland Convention Center. [Click here](#) for details.
- For more information on the FMSA including factsheets [click here](#).

Related articles

- [FDA takes food safety meetings to Chicago and Portland](#) (2/12, The Packer)
- [Stakeholders offer broad range of feedback on FSMA in first public meeting](#) (3/5, Food Safety News)

Pesticide MRL Event

Related article

- [EPA seeks input on pesticide residue limits on or in various commodities](#) (2/27, Federal Register)

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Washington Workshop on Maximum Residue Levels (MRL's)

by the Washington Blueberry commission

- **March 20** —10:00 am to 3:00 pm at the Best Western Cotton Tree Convention Center, 2300 Market Street, Mt. Vernon.
- Growers, exporters, handlers and other berry industry personnel are encouraged to attend.
- *Please RSVP by March 17th.* Contact the Washington Blueberry Commission office: abragg@centurytel.net, 509 266 4300.
- The objectives of the meeting are:
 - Update attendees latest MRL developments.
 - Discuss with the commission on what needs to be done in regards to MRLs and developing export markets.
- Speakers will include Matt Lantz from [Bryant Christie, Inc.](#), Mike Willett from [Northwest Hort Council](#), John Dunley from WilburEllis, [Joe DeFrancesco](#) from OSU, [Lynell Tanigoshi](#) from WSU and Alan Schreiber from the [Washington Blueberry Commission](#).

Pest Management

Pesticide News

- **Gowan voluntarily cancels all “MSR Spray Concentrate” registrations**
 - This includes the Washington state Special Local Needs labels for strawberries and for non-bearing caneberries.
 - Gowan will not sell or distribute any product after December 31, 2014.
 - Gowan customers (distributors, retailers, dealers etc.) would only be able to sell Gowan labeled products for 2 years after the effective cancellation (December 31, 2016).
 - Any end users who purchased the product prior to cancellation can use the product till gone or for further two years (December 31, 2018).

Usual March Pest Management

In most years activities involving the management of the following pests happen during March. They're associated with the warming temperatures and renewed plant growth.

Insects/Mites

- [Raspberry Crown Borer](#) **caneberries**: If you've had borer problems in the past, March is the time to drench for crown borer management in caneberries.
- [Strawberry Crown Moth](#) **southern caneberries**: In Oregon and Southwest Washington, this borer looks to do as much, if not more, damage in caneberries as the Raspberry Crown Borer. The treatment is the same as for RCB- a spring (or fall) insecticide drench.

- [Clay Colored Weevils](#) **southern strawberries**: This early emerging species is usually just considered a pest of raspberries in northern growing areas where it feeds on newly emerging shoots and buds. But in the last few years emerged adult Clay Colored Weevils have been recovered from SW Washington southern strawberry fields and blueberry fields.
- [Redberry Mite](#) **evergreen blackberries**: Dormant sprays of lime/sulfur or elemental sulfur for Blackberry Rust and Redberry Mite are recommended in March.

Diseases

- [Phytophthora Root Rot](#) **raspberries**: March is the time to use a fungicide drench in raspberries. Warm, saturated soils are the conditions that favor this organism, allowing it to spread quickly.
- [Blackberry Rust \(Phragmidium Rust\)](#) **Evergreen blackberries**: Dormant spray of lime/sulfur or elemental sulfur for Blackberry Rust and Redberry Mites is recommended in March to prevent later problems.
- [Cane Blight](#) **raspberries**: A good time to spot symptoms of cane blight is as the buds break. Infected canes will show either no bud break if the cane has been girdled or one-sided bud break if the infection is on one side. Scrape canes to look for rust colored streaks usually coming up from machine harvester scars. There is no treatment for cane blight once it's present, only prevention. The time to prevent next year's canes from getting infected is to apply an appropriate fungicide immediately after harvest when fresh wounds normally become infected.
- [Purple Blotch](#) **blackberries**: Check for cane lesions that are easy to see as the weather warms but the foliage has not yet emerged. It's a good time to assess disease level.

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Ongoing Possible Field Management Activities

All crops

- Weed management.
- Plan fertilizer program.
- **Scout for and plan for [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 (& starlings)—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.

Zinc Phosphide baits cannot be used after budbreak

Blueberries

- **Treat for [Mummyberry](#) as needed.** (See Alert at top of newsletter) *You can scout for sprouting mummyberries on the ground but they can be very difficult to find. Base treatments on plant stage, environmental conditions and the past history of the field and surrounding fields.*
- **Scout for [Pseudomonas \(Bacterial Blight\)](#)** Water-soaked lesions usually appear in February in some fields that then develop into reddish brown to black cankers.
- **Plan for [Bird](#) issues: **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 — plan your control strategy now.
 - [European starlings and their control](#) (Cornell University)
 - [Starling Population Control Methods](#). (Wild Wing Company)
- **[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 problems beginning this last week. 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.

Blackberries

- Scout for [Purple Blotch](#) lesions in Marion berries to assess field disease levels for later treatments.
- Can apply lime sulfur for [Redberry Mites](#) and/or disease management.
- Can drench for [crown borer](#) management.

Evergreen Blackberries

- Can apply lime/sulfur for [blackberry rust](#).

Raspberries

- Can apply lime sulfur for disease management.
- Can apply Ridomil for [Phytophthora root rot](#) management.
- Can drench for [crown borer](#) management.
- Scout for Cane Blight symptoms as buds break.

Strawberries

- Can apply pre-emergent herbicides.
- As plants start to grow, watch for weak growing areas and check rots for [weevil larvae](#), [root rot](#) and/or cold damage.

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Industry News/Resources

Newsletters/ Berry Reports

- [British Columbia Berry Grower Magazine](#)—Spring Issue
- [Michigan State Extension Blueberry News](#) (3/5)
- [The Source](#) (3/11) *Market reports from The Produce News*

Magazine compilations

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

Berry Research Blogs

- [Strawberries and Caneberries](#) by Mark Bolda, UC Davis Berry Extension Agent. **Recent entry: 3/8—A Treatise on Powdery Mildew in Strawberry** *Reports on recent insect and disease research and observations in California.*
- [Strawberries and Vegetables](#) by Surendra Dara, UC Davis Extension Specialist. **Recent entry: 2/25—Year-round IPM program for strawberries: An annual plan for pest management.**
- [NC Blueberry Journal](#) by Bill Cline, North Carolina State Extension Specialist. **Recent entries: 3/6—Deer damage to buds/ 3/5—Mummy berry emerging this week** *Reports on issues in blueberries from the Southeast.*
- [Team Rubus](#) by Gina Fernandez, North Carolina State Small Fruit Specialist. **Recent entry: 2/25—Are you ready for spring?** *Reports on issues in blackberries and raspberries from the Southeast.*
- [NC Small Fruit and Specialty Crop IPM](#) by Hannah Burrack, NCSU extension entomologist. **Recent entry: 2/21—What insecticides are acceptable where?** *Reports on insect issues in the Southeast.*

Pesticide Issues

- [Bee careful with pesticides](#) (3/11, Western Farm Press)
- [Pesticide battle over honey bee health under way](#) (3/5, Western Farm Press)

Research/Breeding

- [Consumer preferences for high-tunnel raspberry varieties](#) (3/4, MSU Extension)
- [EU: Driscoll's offers first glasshouse strawberries](#) (3/8, Fresh Plaza)

Marketing

- [Fourth quarter results favorable for fruit, organics](#) (3/8, The Packer)
- [California Giant sweepstakes to back spring berries](#) (3/6, The Packer)

Technology

- [Rise of the Ag Drones](#) (3/6, PrecisionAg)
- [On-farm technology in the palm of your hand](#) (3/11, Western Farm Press)

Labor & Immigration

- [Washington coalition wants immigration reform](#) (3/5, Capital Press)
- [Why are Mexicans leaving farm work and what does this mean for US farmers?](#) (3/8, Oxford Press)
- [Michigan ICE audits coming](#) (3/4, Fruit Grower News)

- [Florida blueberry growers learn about labor laws](#) (3/7, The Packer)

Farm/Food Politics

- [US farm trade frets over sequestration, meat sector worries most](#) (3/5, Reuters)

West

- [Washington State ag director to leave office April 1](#) (3/11, Capital Press)

North America

- [Blueberry inventory up over last year, USDA finds](#) (3/4, Capital Press)
- [Florida blueberry growers gird for record crop](#) (3/8, Growing Produce)
- [Florida blueberry industry already at crossroads as it matures](#) (3/8, The Produce News)
- [North Carolina's Cottle Farms packing first Florida fruit under its own label this season](#) (3/11, The Produce News)

International

- Chile: [Blueberry season winds down](#) (3/11, Fresh Plaza)
- [Chilean blueberry season enters home stretch](#) (3/8, Fresh Fruit Portal)

Event Calendar

For more comprehensive event calendar, [click here](#).

- **March 13 — Oregon Blackberry & Raspberry Commission** ~ 9 am Langdon Farms Golf Club. Call 541-758-4043 or [email](#) Phillip Gutt for more information.
- **March 20 — Washington Blueberry Commission: Workshop on Maximum Residue Levels** ~10:00 am to 3:00 pm Location TBA (in the Mt Vernon-Seattle vicinity). *An RSVP is required.* For information, please contact the Washington Blueberry Commission office abrugg@centurytel.net, 509 266 4300.
- **April 10 — Washington Red Raspberry Commission** ~ Puyallup, WA. Call 360-354-8767 or [email](#) Henry Bierlink for more information.
- **April 22-23 — International Blueberry Organization's 2nd Annual Meeting** ~ Santiago, Chile. [Click here](#) for the website.
- **April 23 — Oregon Blueberry Commission** ~ Noon (budget hearing) at [Chemeteka Community College](#), Chemeketa Events at Winema, building 48, rooms 202 A and B. For more details call (503) 364-2944 or email [Lisa Ostlund](#).
- **June 18-20 — Berry Health Benefits Symposium** ~ Charlotte, North Carolina. [Click here](#) for registration and agenda information.

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Archived Small Fruit Updates

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

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This document is a guide and not intended as a recommendation or endorsement.
Consult with your supplier, field representative, or pest consultant.