

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 29, 2012

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Featured:

- [The blueberry paths ahead for Peru and Mexico](#)
(2/21, FreshFruitPortal.com)
- [Bee supply better for the 2012 almond pollination](#)
(2/23, Western Farm Press) *Should bode well for our bee supply this spring.*

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

Not much field activity has been possible this last week. It's been rainy & cool with plant development relatively slow. No sign of the 'traditional' February weather break, so most new spring plantings are on hold.

There's some concern from Marionberry growers who have tied up their fields making them more vulnerable to cold spells.

Blueberry growers are also seeing plant development moving into green tip stage and are concerned over early mummyberry infections as well as potential cold damage. While mummyberry concerns are valid & preventative materials should be applied in high risk locations; the disease's 'mushrooms' growing out of last year's mummyberries on the ground develop and release spores very slowly at cold temperatures (below 45F). If we get into warm and wet conditions over the next few weeks, spore release and infection risks take off at just the time when getting preventative applications on is the most difficult. You just need to be persistent with managing this disease -- re-apply preventative sprays more often during mild, wet weather, use some cultural methods on infected sites (like burying the mummy's) and hope for the occasional weather year that can help break the cycle.

Tom Peerbolt

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](#)

Disease Alert: [Mummyberry](#) (blueberries)- Be ready with a management program by the time fields at risk reach 'green tip stage'. That's when new infections can begin.

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

- **Blueberries, Raspberries: (Friday, 2/24)** Not a lot of change from last week's observations except it's snowing and about 1C (34F) at the moment. We're just taking a wait and see attitude for the next week. Carry on with activities as weather permits. Don't put your sleigh away yet.

Northern Washington, Whatcom County

- **Blueberries, raspberries:** (Friday, February 24) Yeah, it's still raining...

Northern Washington, Skagit County

- **Blueberries, blackberries & strawberries:** (Friday, February 24) We're just finishing up pumping standing water off of the fields. Don't think we had much damage except to strawberries that were under a couple days. The weed mat held the mulch in place in the organic blues. Getting smudge pots and wind machines ready in case we get the cold predicted for this Sunday.



Flooded blueberry field Photo by Charley Anderson

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Blueberry Early Spring Weather Management Information (3rd week)

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)".
- [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 (2nd week)

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 (3rd 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

Electrostatic sprayers & using reduced rates

During one of our meetings last month, a grower asked whether, when using an electrostatic sprayer, it is OK to use less water as long as the concentration of spray solution is the same. Joe DeFrancesco passed this question on to the Oregon Department of Ag people in charge of pesticide regulation/enforcement.

- **Question:** If the label wording states, "apply 1.0 lb. product in 50-100 gallons of water/acre", is it a violation to apply "0.5 lb. product in 25 gallons of water?"
- **Answer:** The official ODA answer is no, it is not a violation. But they have to be careful not to change the concentration. (as if in your example they used 1.0 lb of product in 25 gallons of water/acre), number of applications, timing, PHI, etc.
- **Added ODA comment:** We do think that the equipment people should be discussing this with pesticide registrants to clarify the issue.

Ongoing 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.
- **[Mummyberry](#) blueberries:** [See Alert above.](#)

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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Usual March Pest Management

In most years these pests and their management would be happening very soon.

Insects/Mites

- **[Raspberry Crown Borer](#) caneberries:** If you've had borer problems in the past, March is the time to drench for crown borer control 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 couple of 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 and 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.

Industry News/Resources

Newsletters

- [Michigan State Fruit News](#) (2/23)
- ['The Source'](#) (2/27) Market updates from *The Produce News*.

Food Safety

- [Obama feon food processors for safety would raise prices, industry says](#) (2/24, Bloomberg News)
- [Food industry continues to oppose fees to fund FDA](#) (2/28, Food Safety 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

- [Help wanted in fight for labor](#) (2/6, Growing Produce)
- [Labor supply tops concerns at USDA outlook forum](#) (2/23, The Packer)

West

- [Berry Blues: Fungus hits blueberry growers](#) (2/20, Yamhill Valley News-Register) *A story on mummyberry.*

National

- (SE US) [Frost nips early blueberries](#) (2/21, The Packer)
- (Michigan) [Blueberry Farm cancels U-Pick option](#) (2/22, MLIVE) *Problems with legality, paperwork & waste.*
- [Berries lead retail produce sales in 2011](#) (2/23, The Packer)

International

- [South Korea trade pact gives immediate opportunities](#) (2/28, The Packer)
- (China) [New report from International Strawberry Symposium](#) (2/23, Growing Produce)
- (New Zealand) [Boysenberry growers call it a day after 4 bad seasons](#) (2/28, FreshPlaza)
- (Serbia) [USAID helping Serbian berry fruit producers diversify production](#) (2/28, Emg.rs)
- (EU) [Seizures of illegal strawberries in EU ports](#) (2/22, FreshPlaza) *An actual enforcement of intellectual property rights.*

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Event Calendar

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

- **March 7 — ORBC Production Raspberry & Blackberry Workshop** ~ 8:30-3:30, Wellspring Conference Center, Woodburn, OR. [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** ~ 10 am, Langdon Farms Golf Club. For more information, call 541-758-4043 or [email](#) Philip Gutt.
- **New posting: March 19 — WSU Extension's Northwest Washington Sustainable Agriculture Conference** ~ 8-4:30, Mt. Baker Rotary Building, Lynden, WA. [Click here](#) for the agenda & registration information.
- **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. Baits cannot be used after bud break.
- Weed management.

Blueberries

- Treat for mummyberry as needed.
- 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 before bud break.
- Can apply Bacterial Blight (*Pseudomonas*) management materials.

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.

Evergreen Blackberries

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

Raspberries

- Can apply lime sulfur for Redberry Mites and/or disease management.
- Delayed by weather--Scout for Cane Blight symptoms as buds break.

Strawberries

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

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

[02-21-12](#)

[02-14-12](#)

[01-10-12](#)