

# 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.

March 6, 2012

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### Featured: Mechanical Harvester Videos

- [Oxbo 9120 Raspberry harvester / Oxbo 930 berry harvester](#) The smaller, pull behind version./ [Oxbo Channel](#)—all their videos.
- [BEI Black Ice Machine harvesting fresh blueberries / BEI Channel](#)—all their videos
- [Vinotech Equipment](#) (Prosser, WA) Includes [Littau harvester](#) among 50 videos of various orchard & tree fruit equipment. [Vinotech website](#)
- [Serbian Kokan 1000 Air Harvester](#) Kind of interesting. What are those orange brushes on the catcher plates?
- [Polish Joanna-3 side harvester](#) This one tips the harvester head horizontally.

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

*It's been another slow field week as we continue the transition from winter to spring. In the Willamette Valley we had light snow last Tuesday, 60 degrees and sunny on Sunday, a dusting of light snow yesterday (Monday) and a forecast of sunny and 60's this Thursday. Plant development has been sluggish as night temperatures have been in the thirties for the most part. Better be ready for this next warm spell as it looks like mild, wet weather next week. Have the pre-emergent herbicides down and the mummyberry preventative applications on. A few good days with higher night temperatures will also push plant development very quickly.*

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, Raspberries:** (Tuesday, 3/6) Colder, wet weather of the past week has kept development to a slow pace in blues. Today we had heavy rain, flurries, wind, sun and it's supposed to freeze tonight. So depending on where you farm in the valley the plants could be doing anything. Last week I found some 'stipes' growing from exposed mummies on the ground but have yet to find any cups formed in fields I have visited. But we will be getting close to the first mummyberry sprays by next week depending on the weather. Getting some pre-emergent weed control on now between weather events.

### 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](#)

## Northern Washington, Whatcom County (Monday, March 5)

2 inches of snow Wednesday, hung on into Thursday. We may get a little more today. Anybody up for coffee and Bailey's? Doesn't appear to me much if any winter damage so far, just WET. Rained most of Sunday and into today. This season is on course to be as late as last year.

- **Strawberries:** Strawberries not moving. Watch for vole trails through the crown area, and feeding damage to the emerging growth.
- **Blueberries:** Blueberry flower buds pushing, we'll need a few days above 50 degrees before the mummyberries make an appearance. Playing around with herbicide rotations, some folks applying Callisto and/or Chateau in the fall, and Sandea plus simazine or diuron in the spring. Looks good so far, we need to establish minimum rates.
- **Raspberries:** Raspberry buds pushing also, trying to finish tying the last of the baby fields. Real close to lime sulfur time. Watch for cutworms/armyworms and clay weevil, they love to munch on the emerging laterals. Spraying lime sulfur at night may control the worms.



Thought winter was over in Whatcom County? Think again. 3/6/12  
Photo by Brian Cieslar

## Northern Washington, Skagit County (Friday, March 2)

- **Blueberries, blackberries:** We hit a low of 20.8F in the wee hours of Monday morning. Running the fans and burning smudge pots got the temperature up to 25.7. The neighbor's bottomed out about 26 F, their blackberry plantings being slightly higher in elevation. I don't believe we sustained any damage, although the Reka (blueberry) is showing some brown tips on the buds. Sprayed copper on some blocks and Serenade on others on Sunday before the temperature dropped to reduce the ice nucleating bacteria load (in theory anyway). Snow levels in the mountains are very low, the next 3 weeks will be critical given our bud development. All fingers crossed!

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## Processed Blackberry Market Commentary

The processed blackberry market is undergoing some changes. Both yields and grower price were up last year over 2010. Cold storage figures remain very low reflecting an increase in demand. Global competition is increasing.

- **Editor's Comments:** For those of you unfamiliar with the Northwest's processed blackberry industry, it has been dominated for many years by the [Marion Blackberry](#). Black Diamond (discussed below) was released in 2005 and, while not having a flavor profile that matches Marion, it is thornless, higher yielding and more cold hardy. It might make an excellent new 'product' for diversifying our grower's choices if both the supply and demand for it could be increased. The dilemma is...how to sell more Black Diamond (& other new varieties) without harming our established Marion market.

- **Processor Comments received this week:** *From an email received this week from an Oregon processor: (edited version): "I've just returned from meetings with some of our customers and felt I should update you on what I see going on in the processed blackberry world. For the second year now we have had an overwhelming interest and requests for the Black Diamond blackberry variety. One difference I see this year is that the buyers have gotten the approval with their R&D staff for using more Black Diamond so they are aggressively looking for packers to get this planted. Any thoughts or ideas to help growers understand this direction would be appreciated".*
- [Click here](#) for the official description of Black Diamond.
- **Skagit Grower Comments on Black Diamond:** "We've found Black Diamond to yield well, IQF well and have great flavor (my kid's favorite); however, our planting has frozen out 3 of the last 5 years and they are very difficult to train. The canes tend to be brittle and break easily no matter when we try to tie them: late fall, winter or early spring. We have an acre of **Nightfall**, another trailing type, which was released about the same time, that is very flexible and easy to train (you could make baskets with it....). It doesn't tend to winter kill but it has a very tart flavor."
- **New Advanced Selection Blackberries—Improved flavor profile on the horizon?**
  - The March 7<sup>th</sup> ORBC Production Raspberry & Blackberry Workshop will be featuring information on some of the newer selections now going into farm testing ([Click here for the agenda](#)).
  - This meeting is close to capacity from the RSVP's received to date, but if you'd like to attend it'll be 8:30-3:30 at the Wellspring Conference Center, Woodburn, OR. Contact Peerbolt Crop Management by [email](#) or phone 503-289-7287 for more information.

## 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.

## Classifieds

### Peerbolt Crop Management Field Services for 2012 (3<sup>rd</sup> 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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## Ongoing Pest Management & IPM

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### 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.

## Usual March Pest Management

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*In most years these pests and their management would be happening very soon. They're associated with the warming temperatures and renewed plant growth that usually happen in March.*

### 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.

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## Industry News/Resources

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### Newsletters

- [Michigan State Fruit News](#) (3/2)
- [‘The Source’](#) (3/5) Market updates from *The Produce News*.
- [Imperial Frozen Foods Newsletter for 3/1](#)

### 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](#)

### Food Safety

- [FDA rule gives government more access to records](#) (2/28, The Packer)
- [One step closer to harmonized GAP standards](#) (3/2, The Packer)

### Research/Breeding

- [Cornell releases darkest strawberry yet – “Purple Wonder”](#) (3/5, FreshPlaza)

### National

- [Expanding Mexican strawberry industry hurts Florida strawberry growers](#) (2/26, Orlando Sentinel)
- [Florida blueberry growers will collect a bounty this year as industry matures](#) (3/2, Produce News)
- [Frozen-food sales boost Inventure group](#) (3/2, Arizona Republic)

### International

- [Serbia exports raspberries to EU](#) (3/1, Tanjug.rs)
- [Spanish strawberry season approaching its peak](#) (3/5, HortiBiz)
- [Chilean berry giant Hortifrut to raise \\$75 million capital to expand](#) (3/5, FreshFruitPortal)

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## Event Calendar

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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.
- **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.
- **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

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### 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**

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

[02-29-12](#)

[02-21-12](#)

[02-14-12](#)