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July 2000 Regional Fruit Newsletter

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- 8/21 [Organic Apple Production Field Day](#)
John Amos' farm, Elk Rapids area
1:30 - 3:30 p.m.
- 8/21 [Herbicide Demonstration](#)
Paul Hubbell Farm, Elk Rapids area
3:30 p.m.
- 8/31 [NW Mich Hort Res Station Open House & Leelanau Hort Society Barbecue](#)
2:00 - ?
- 12/5-7 Michigan State Hort Show
Grand Rapids

2001

- 1/22 National Cherry Growers & Industries
Foundation Annual Meeting
Grand Traverse Resort
- 1/23-24 NW Michigan Orchard Show
Grand Traverse Resort

APPLE MATURITY PROGRAM

By Gary Thornton, District Fruit IPM Agent

Once again the NWMHRS will be providing growers information on the optimum time to harvest their fruit. Optimum maturity will be for long term CA storage and will be based on starch/iodine and pressure tests. If interested in having your fruit tested, drop off 10 apples picked randomly from the outside of the trees.

Information will be compiled and put on the PestNet (Code-A-Phone) as well as faxed to apple growers. If you interested in picking up the information via the PestNet, call 947-3063 and go to the pome fruit message.

The predicted dates for northwest Michigan, based on temperatures and bloom dates from the NWMHRS are as follows:

McIntosh - September 9
Jonathon - September 27
Red Delicious - October 3

HERBICIDE DEMONSTRATION

By Gary Thornton

August 21st, 3:30pm

Paul Hubbell farm at corner of Munroe Rd. and Gay Rd. From Traverse City, head N on US-31 to Townline Rd. (1 mile south of Elk Rapids), turn east, take Townline to Munro Rd., and turn south for 1 mile to corner of Munro and Gay Rds.

Dr. Jerry Hull, MSU and Gary Thornton, District IPM Agent

Herbicide treatments were made last fall and this spring in various combinations; 30 treatments in total were made. Most of the treatments you will recognize, such as simazine, Sinbar, Karmex, to name a few. Many of the treatments are combinations of products targeted at specific weed pressures. Highlighted this year is a new herbicide, Milestone. Milestone is a DuPont product which is nearing the time it will be labeled on apples.

Although these treatments were made on apple, several of them are labeled on cherry also and the results should be applicable.

ORGANIC FRUIT PRODUCTION FIELD DAY

By Gary Thornton

August 21st, 1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

Located on *John Amos' farm* near Elk Rapids, MI

(From Traverse City, head N on US-31 to Townline Rd. (1 mile south of Elk Rapids), turn east, take Townline to Munro Rd., and turn south

for ½ mile to Amos' pear orchard on east side of road.

If it can be done successfully, organic production becomes a possible opportunity for growers to increase their bottom line. Markets exist in Michigan for organically produced cherries, apples and pears, among other crops. Some of these markets are for fresh product and others are for processed. This field day will introduce the organic approach to growers who are interested in diversifying their markets.

Topics that will be covered will include the results from a trial on tart cherries in Antrim County, and a grower's experience in growing organic (transition) tart cherries for the first time. In addition, results from this year on the production of organic pears (transition) will be presented.

Organic pesticide efficacy will be covered as well as controlling codling moth with pheromone disruption. Cost analysis will be done on the programs as well.

Resource people for the meeting will include Dave Epstein, MSU; Dennis Sekutowski and John Mosko, Englehard Corp., Cheryl Kobernik, organic grower; Pepper Bromelmier, NRCS; Gary Thornton, MSUE, Duke Elsner, MSUE and Alan Middleton, IPM consultant.

This field day is sponsored by MSU Extension, Michigan Agricultural Stewardship Assoc., Engelhard Corp., and Natural Resources Conservation Service.

ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE

The annual Open House at the NW Michigan Horticultural Research Station will be held this year on *Thursday, August 31st*. As usual, the program is being held in conjunction with the Leelanau Horticultural Society's annual meeting. There is no equipment show this year (the equipment show is every other year).

The afternoon's educational format will have concurrent programs, in the field and possibly in the Station's conference room. Growers will move to various locations to attend the programs of their choice. The Open House educational program will begin at 2:00 p.m. with the first of the concurrent sessions beginning at 2:15 p.m. The concurrent programs will be scheduled for four 30-minute time slots, with 15 minutes in between, ending at 5:00 p.m.

From 5:00 to 6:00 p.m. there will be a social hour, and from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. the Leelanau County Horticultural Society will hold a barbecue, followed by a short annual meeting and award presentations. Tickets for the barbecue will be available at the door for \$15.

Sponsors for the Open House are the Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station, MSU Extension, the Northwest Michigan Horticultural Research Foundation and the Leelanau Horticultural Society.

Hope you can join us!

TOP THOSE TALL SWEETS!

By Jim Nugent, District Horticulturist, MSUE

As I view sweet cherry orchards in NW Michigan, I often see mature orchards that are too tall! Tall trees increase shade problems in the lower canopy, ultimately resulting in loss of the lower canopy due to shading. As the trees grow taller and lower canopy dies, the fruiting area moves higher and higher. The result -- more problems controlling fruit rots, cherry leaf spot and insects. Keep in mind that a tall tree not only shades the lower area of itself, but also shades lower area of neighboring trees during mornings and afternoons.

My advice is to concentrate the pruning in the tops before the lower wood weakens and dies, rather than waiting for lower wood to die and spending the time cutting out dead wood in the bottoms. Prune tall tops down to a horizontal limb.

While tall trees may not be as severe of a problem in tarts, still with today's close plant spacings, shading is an important issue. It is quite likely, though as yet unproven, that increased shading may play a role in the "soft fruit" problem in tart cherries. And in addition to increased problems with disease and insect control, tall trees also result in higher fruit velocities during harvest, which can lead to increased problems with fruit damage. So even with tarts, some situations may warrant removal of the tops.

PRUNING CHERRIES AFTER HARVEST

By Jim Nugent

We have had good results doing the pruning on bearing tart cherries after harvest that would normally be done during dormant season. The window for this pruning is anytime post-harvest till about Labor Day. Do not prune trees later into the fall as this could impact winter hardiness. Likewise, do not prune young trees that have not filled their space.

So far we have seen no adverse effects of pruning mature sweet cherries during this time period as well. However, I'm more cautious with sweets due to potential influence on winter hardiness, so would limit work to light and/or moderate pruning. Do not use this time for heavy pruning and do not prune young trees.

At this time of year, labor is often readily available and is generally easier than pruning during the winter months.

Please send any comments or suggestions regarding this site to:

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