



## INDEX

Crop Conditions  
 Weather Update  
 Apple Diseases: What To Do?  
 Ugly Stubs & Fire Blight  
 Pesticide Use Survey  
 June is Indiana Wine and Grape  
 Month  
 Care of New Grape Plantings  
 Fruit Drop on Apples  
 Young Tree Care  
 Strawberry Prices  
 IHS Summer Meeting  
 Pesticide Container Recycling  
 Questions and Answers  
 Subscribe Electronically  
 Coming Meetings

### CROP CONDITIONS

FFF 99-07  
 June 2, 1999

**Crop Conditions:** In the south apples are about 10-20 mm in size, which is getting on the late side for any further chemical thinning, whereas in the north many fruit are around the 10 mm stage. There is still time for chemical thinning if required, but from what we've seen fruit drop on apples is heavy in many places around the state, so further thinning may not be necessary. Strawberry harvest is underway in the south and quality and yield are excellent. Grapes and brambles are past bloom for the most part. Both crops look to have a heavy fruit set so yields should be relatively high. Blueberry harvest should begin soon in the southern part of the state and by the end of the month in central and northern areas. We're expecting near average yields this year.

**Weather Update:** The 6 to 10 day forecast calls for above normal temperature and normal precipitation. The 30 day outlook calls for normal temperature and precipitation and the 90 day outlook calls for below normal temperature and normal precipitation.

**Apple Diseases: What To Do?** Now is the time growers need to be walking their orchards looking for symptoms of apple scab, fire blight, powdery mildew, and rust. When looking for diseases select those blocks which are most disease prone. Ida red, Jonathan, and Romes are "good" trees to inspect for disease doings; they are all highly susceptible to scab, blight, mildew and rust. If you do see symptoms of any of the above mentioned diseases we suggest the following: **a) apple scab** - If scab is detected, the safest bet is to apply Rubigan or Nova in combination with a FULL rate of captan to provide optimum protection of the developing fruitlets; **b) fire blight** - immediately cut out blighted twigs 10 to 12 inches below any sign of infection, being sure to sterilize pruning tools between each cut; maintain good control of sucking insects which are primary carriers for secondary spread of blight; and apply streptomycin within 24 hours following injury from hail storms. Special attention should be given to young trees and trees on

M9 and M26 rootstocks or interstems; **c) powdery mildew** - maintain mildewcide sprays until terminal growth stops; **d) rust** - relax and enjoy the colorful display of orange spots on leaves and/or green depressions on fruit— no further infection from rust will occur this year, therefore rust is one disease you don't have to worry about any longer. -Pecknold

**Ugly Stubs & Fire Blight:** Growers should be especially alert for fire blight symptoms in late May to early June....this is generally the time fire blight makes itself known. Look for new growth that appears wilted and crooked at the tip with browning and wilting of leaves. Efforts to limit secondary spread by cutting out fire blight strikes are most successful if these strikes can be removed immediately after they appear. Cut out blighted twigs 10 to 12 inches below any sign of infection; however, if the infected shoot is associated with the main trunk or a major scaffolding limb you may want to try the "ugly stub" cut to help avoid possible canker formation. Do not cut flush with the trunk or major limb, but instead leave a naked 4-5 inch branch stub. Marking the ugly stubs with flags or a bright colored paint when the cuts are made can help in relocating them during the winter pruning operation, when the ugly stubs are removed, without fear of canker formation. -

**Pesticide Use Survey:** Purdue Pesticide Programs and Agricultural Statistics Service will conduct a survey Indiana grape growers. During June and July the Agricultural Statistics Service will be contacting growers by telephone. The survey results will present information on grape production in Indiana and highlight current pests and pest control methods. The survey results will enable regulatory agencies, public policy officials and environmental groups to discuss pesticide-use issues more knowledgeably. The survey is confidential. All grape growers are encouraged to participate.

**June is Indiana Wine and Grape Month:** Wineries from the shores of Lake Michigan to the banks of the Ohio River will be offering visitors a chance to get away and help celebrate this special month! Proclaimed by Governor Frank O'Bannon as Indiana Wine and Grape Month, many of the state's 19 wineries will be celebrating by hosting special activities. For more information and a free Indiana Wineries brochure, contact the Indiana Wine Grape Council at 800-832-WINE or 765-494-3842.

**Care of New Grape Plantings:** There have been several new vineyards planted around the state in the past few years. Those planted this spring should be growing well. Depending on the date of planting, vines should be at a point where they will need some initial training. Some of the vines we planted four weeks ago have shoots just growing out the top of 30 inch grow tubes. Other varieties are quite a bit behind this, but should catch up fast. Be sure to provide support for these shoots to avoid damage from the shoot scraping across the edge of the tube. Either use a string tied between the mid and upper trellis wire (if the trellis is established) or tie the shoot to the stake supporting the grow tube. We use "tapeners" for quick, easy tying of shoots to the support, but any type of tie will work so long as it doesn't girdle the shoot. Shoots should be removed along the trunk of one and two year old vines to concentrate growth along the top wire for cordon establishment. Shoot removal usually needs to be done two or three times during the season.

Control weeds! I can't overemphasize the importance of controlling weeds in new grape plantings. Despite the depth of the root system, vines do not compete well with weeds. Cultivation or post emergent herbicide application will be necessary if pre-emergent material wasn't used at planting or has lost effectiveness. Glyphosate (e.g. Roundup) can safely be used on vines in grow tubes, but extreme care must be taken using glyphosate around unprotected vines. If grasses are the main weed problem then grass-specific

herbicides such as Poast, Fusilade, or Prism may be better choices. See the weed control section in the 1999 Commercial Small Fruit & Grape Spray Guide for complete information. -*Bordelon*

**Fruit Drop on Apples:** Despite the good weather and mostly good flowering, fruit drop appears to be pretty heavy in many places. This coupled with the warm early weather should result in a large fruit size year. Unfortunately crops in some places look like they'll be somewhat short of a full crop. There's not much we can do about that at this stage, except perhaps hold off on any further applications of chemical thinners until fruit drop is a bit further along so we can see what we've got. -*Hirst*

**Young Tree Care:** If you planted apple trees this spring, don't forget about them. A little care and attention now will pay big dividends in terms of tree development and getting the trees into bearing early. Now is a good time to select your scaffold branches and apply toothpicks or clothespins to flatten out the branch angles. If you have an excessive amount of bud break on the trunk (too many potential scaffold branches), then I'd reduce this back to about 8 now by pinching out unwanted shoots. This helps the tree divert it's energy into the 8 you want to keep. Of those 8, you'll want to gradually reduce this back to 4 later on in about the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> year, but leaving around 8 gives you plenty of options and allows some extra branches for early fruiting. Also good weed control around young trees is essential if you want to get the most out of them. -*Hirst*

**Strawberry Prices:** The southern Indiana crop is one or two weeks ahead of normal and the early spring and dry conditions have lead to a large crop of berries of excellent quality. Eastern Flower Thrips have caused some damage in the central part of the state, but overall the damage doesn't appear too severe. Most berries grown in Indiana are sold Pick-Your-Own, or ready picked at the farm. How much should you charge? Dr. Richard C. Funt, Extension Specialist at Ohio State University reminds growers that the OSU economic analysis indicates that there is a loss of investment with 5000 pounds/acre and \$.80/lb pick-your-own price. This translates to a similar loss if ready-picked berries are sold at \$1.55 per pound or \$2.25 per quart. He reports that prices in his area are near 1998 levels for pick-your-own, ranging from 75 to 95 cents per pound and from \$1.75 to \$2.40 per quart ready-picked. That doesn't leave much of a margin for profit. Know your yields and set your prices accordingly. Don't drop your price to stimulate sales. You have to sell a lot more berries at a lowered price to make the same profit. -*Bordelon*

***IHS Summer Meeting:*** Planning for the summer meeting is pretty much complete and we are looking forward to meeting at County Line Orchard and experiencing some of Dave and Bonnie McAfee's hospitality (and they have plenty!). A BBQ and round table discussion will be held during the evening of June 29 and a full day of tours and presentations is planned for June 30. The McAfees are among the best marketers in the state and will share their experience and innovative ideas with us on subjects such as school tours, corn mazes, petting zoos, you-pick, using the internet, etc. Whether you're a new fruitgrower or have been in the business for 30 years, there will be something we can all learn from the McAfee's operation. County Line Orchard is in Hobart, IN (Lake County), about 1.1 miles south of S.R. 6 on County Line Rd.

Summer Meeting Agenda  
Tuesday, June 29, 1999

Meet at County Line Orchard Apple Barn

- 6:00 pm Hamburger cookout.
- 7:00 pm Roundtable discussion led by Peter Hirst  
Bring your observations on the 1999 season and your concerns. If you have slides or pictures to share of the season so far, bring them along. Hopefully Dr. Ashworth will be able to be with us.
- 9:00 pm Adjourn

Wednesday, June 30, 1999

Meet at County Line Orchard Apple Barn.

- 8:00 am Registration and Coffee
- 8:50 am Introduction of exhibitors
- 9:00 am Visit market and other facilities
- 10:15 am Break
- 10:30 am Visit the orchards
- 12:00 Lunch on the grounds
- 1:00 pm IHS business meeting
- 1:30 pm Presentations by Purdue staff
- 3:00 pm Tour A  
Either: Johnson's Strawberry Farm - featuring plasticulture grown strawberries. The season will probably be over but we can still see how these berries are grown and marketed.  
or: School tour organization. See how the McAfees organize themselves and their clients to be able to serve so many people in such a short season. (Bonnie has been the key.)
- 4:15 pm Tour B  
Either: Marketing: "Selling the Sizzle": Apples, Pumpkins, petting barnyard and the "experience".  
or: Simulated school tour. Get a first hand idea of what is offered to the students and their teachers when they arrive for a tour.
- 5:30 pm Final comments and Adjourn

Notes: Registration will be \$2.00 per family.  
Lunch Wednesday will be priced to just recover costs.

**Pesticide Container Recycling:** The Office of the Indiana State Chemist is offering pesticide container recycling at several locations across the state August 3 through September 9. Contact the OISC at 765-494-1594 for the date of a location near you.

**Questions and Answers:** Growers often have questions about articles that appear in this newsletter, or topics we don't cover. If you have a question or a topic you would like to see discussed, send it to one of us by mail or email and we'll be happy to do an article for the next issue of the newsletter.



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### **Coming Meetings:**

**June 8** - Eastern Indiana Hort. Society Twilight Orchard Tour and Program. From 6 p.m. until about 9 p.m. in Jay County. The host will be Carl Funk of 4682 West C.R. 350 South, Portland, Indiana. Between Redkey and Portland on S.R. 67 at Como go 1/2 mile east on C.R. 350 South. Besides the orchard and seasonal farm market, the Funks raise various vegetables. They own 70 hives of honeybees which they lease for pollination. Anyone interested in fruit or vegetable production is invited to participate in this free program, for which no reservations are needed. Contact: Harold Brown at 765-747-7732.

**June 10** - Blueberry Growers of Indiana Summer meeting. Luedtke's Blueberries, 725 East 1400 North, Wheatfield. 4:00 pm Farm tour, 5:00 pm Pot luck dinner, 6:00 pm BGIN business meeting. Contact Melvin VanKley at 219-956-3687.

**June 17** - Illinois Summer Horticulture Field Day. Edwards West orchard, from US 20 west, north on Meridian Road to Cemetary Road then west to the orchard. The hosts, Mike and Lynn Edwards have about 3000 semi-dwarf apples on M.26 rootstock, a donut kitchen, cider mill,

grading and packing area, a retail and gift shop and displays of farm related antiques. School tours are an important part of their business, along with a petting zoo, play maze, a wood train, farm tractor displays and pony rides. Advance registration is \$10 per person, or \$15 on-site. Call Don Naylor, executive secretary of the Illinois Hort. Society at 309-827-2393 for further information.

**June 22-23** - North Central Horticultural Risk Management Workshop, Marriott Hotel, 305 E. Washington Center Road, Exit 112 off I-69, Fort Wayne, Indiana. The focus of this workshop is "managing the variations in profits and protecting business equity" and is intended for Extension Educators and Specialists. Contact David Petritz at 765-494-8494 for additional information.

**June 27** - Indiana Winegrower's Guild Summer meeting, Huber Orchard & Winery, Starlight, IN. Contact Bruce Bordelon at 765-494-8212.

**June 29-30** - Indiana Horticultural Society summer meeting, McAfee Orchard, Hobart, IN. See program in this issue. Contact Peter Hirst at 765-494-1323.

**July 8** - Southeast Indiana Fruit Growers Twilight Orchard Tour. Chateau Pomije Winery, New Alsace. Contact Dan Baugh at 812-926-1189 or Karen Witt at 765-647-3511

**July 14-17** - American Society for Enology and Viticulture/Eastern Section 24th Annual Conference and International Oak Symposium, St. Louis, MO. Contact: Ellen Harkness, Dept. of Food Science, Smith Hall, Purdue Univ. W. Lafayette, IN 47907-1160, Phone 317-494-6704, FAX 317-494-7953 Email: [harkness@foodsci.purdue.edu](mailto:harkness@foodsci.purdue.edu).

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