

Coming Attractions

- March 22 Orchard Manager’s Meeting (OMM). Gene Foster, DEQ, Water Quality Monitoring in Mill Creek.
- March 29 OMM. Jeff Lunden, WSU, Bees and Pollination.
- April 5 OMM. Lynn Long, OSU, Scoring and New Rootstocks and Varieties for cherries.
- April 10—May 8. Watershed training sessions.

See newsletter articles for more details on the above programs.

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Spur Thinning Can Increase Fruit Size

Dwarfing rootstocks and new training systems may provide cherry growers with new possibilities to manipulate fruit set and maximize fruit size and quality. In the past, large trees prevented any manipulation in crop load that may have improved fruit quality factors. Over-setting was an occasional problem with ‘Bing’ or Mazzard, but usually heavy pruning reduced fruit load adequately to produce quality cherries. However, with the highly productive dwarfing rootstocks, and self-fertile varieties a method to reduce crop load has become more important. These rootstocks and varieties will often set so heavily that fruit size and other quality factors are detrimentally affected.

Dr. Roberto Nuñez and other scientists from the Pacific Northwest have been researching the use of chemical thinners to reduce crop load. However, even if a successful thinning agent is discovered, labeling restrictions may

delay utilization of the agent for several years. Therefore, a mechanical method to control fruit set may be an attractive alternative.



As fruit spurs are removed, fruit size increases significantly

See Spur Thinning pg. 3

IFP Corner

By Timothy Dahle, President IFP Committee

The marketplace for fresh produce and the way the public views it’s food supply is changing. The public wants its food to be produced in an environmentally responsible way and some buyers are demanding it.

Lynn Long and several other IFP Committee members have visited

fruit growing areas in Europe that have IFP programs in place. We have brought back some of the materials that they have used in order to help us develop a program in Wasco County. that they have used in order to help us develop a program in Wasco County. See IFP Corner pg. 2

IFP Corner (continued)

These programs are required by most of the major buyers in Europe and those buyers have a hand in forming the guidelines. For the The Dalles to continue to export cherries, a certifiable IFP program will have to be in place. Domestic buyers are already showing some interest in the concept and it is likely that in time, some of them will require certified fruit as well. We intend to make our program compatible with the European program.

The Wasco County IFP committee is working to produce the needed materials for a program. They will include an IFP Grower Handbook, IFP Checklist, and a promotional brochure (for sellers to provide buyers).

Draft copies of the handbook and the checklist are

completed. We will finalize these in March and arrange for printing.

The USDA has recognized this trend as well and they are developing a method to certify programs. Some fruit inspectors in the West have already received training for this purpose. We are currently working with the ODA to implement a certified IFP program for Wasco County.



Wasco County Watershed Stewardship Education Workshops

OSU Extension Service and the Wasco County SWCD will be hosting a series of five watershed education training sessions. Each session includes an indoor classroom session and an outdoor field session. Participants will gain a basic understanding of watershed processes and watershed management implications.

Training sessions will cover the topics of watershed function, wetland function, riparian habitat, salmonid biology, fish habitat enhancement, soil erosion and conservation, and water quality monitoring.

Indoor classes will be held Wednesdays from April 10th to May 8th starting at 6 PM and ending by 9 PM. Field trips will be held Thursdays from



April 11th to May 9th, starting at 4 PM and ending by 7 PM. All sessions will meet at the Mid-Columbia Fire and Rescue Hall, 1400 W. 8th

Street, The Dalles, Oregon. Field trips will visit various sites in the Mill Creek, Three Mile Creek and other nearby watersheds.

Participants will gain an understanding of watershed processes and management

The cost of the workshops is \$25 for the full five weeks, or \$10 for a single session, which includes one indoor class and one field day. Cost

of the workshops includes refreshments, transportation, and handouts. The Learning Guide, the primary resource notebook for the workshops, is available at a separate cost of \$10. To register or for additional information please contact the Wasco County Extension Office at 541-296-5494 by April 3. The program is limited to 25 participants.

Spur Thinning (continued)

European growers will often thin fruit spurs to reduce crop load. In Germany, growers will quickly run their loppers over the top or the top and bottom of a branch to eliminate spurs. French scientists recommend the use of a gloved hand for the same purpose. The amount of spurs removed depends on the initial quantity of spurs and the tree vigor.



Loppers can quickly thin spurs

At last summers 4th International Cherry Symposium Drs. Pierre Lauri and Jacques Claverie reported on spur thinning work they were involved in. Their work related to the influence of spur thinning on the fruit size of ‘Summit’, a large fruited Canadian variety. Table 1 compares fruit size on a non-pruned control versus fruit size on branches with 10%, 20%, 30% and 50% of the spurs removed at bloom. Fruit size increases significantly with the decreasing number of fruit.

conomic value.

Lauri and Claverie also made several other interesting observations. For example, the effects of the spur thinning continued into the second year of the study. In other words, branches that were thinned in year one still had larger fruit size than the control in year two, even though no further thinning took place. In addition, old spurs seemed to be rejuvenated and continued to produce larger quantities of high quality fruit for a longer period of time when other spurs on the branch had been thinned. Furthermore, the incidence of brown rot was significantly decreased on treated versus untreated branches.

Both the Vogel Central Leader and the Spanish Bush training systems lend themselves well to spur thinning. Spur thinning is easily and quickly accomplished by rubbing loppers along the top and/or bottom of a branch. Even a steep leader tree on dwarfing rootstock can be easily and quickly thinned with this method.

In other data presented by Lauri and Claverie, not shown here, the actual number of large fruit (over 28mm) did not increase except in the 50% spur thinned treatment. All other treatments show only a reduction in small fruit. Economically, this may be the most commercially advantageous alternative since small fruit are of questionable eco-

Treatment	No. of cherries	Mean fruit size (mm)
Control	234 (100%)	25.6
10%	221 (94%)	25.8
20%	255 (65%)	26.6
30%	135 (35%)	27.9
50%	132 (34%)	30.5

Data by Lauri and Clavarie



Certified IFP Program on Horizon

European retail stores are insisting that their produce come from certified IFP farms. That was the message heard at a recent Orchard Managers meeting from representatives of Norton Folgate Marketing Ltd. of London. Norton Folgate Marketing is in the cherry business, importing cherries to the U.K. from all over the world including the US, Turkey, Chile and Australia.

Shortly after returning from my sabbatical I wrote an article for my newsletter and the Good Fruit Grower magazine about a program initiated by the 15 largest retail stores in Europe. That program, called Eurepgap is currently being adopted throughout Europe by growers and packing houses. In fact, nearly 95% of all super-markets in Europe have now adopted the Eurepgap standards with the goal of 100% compliance by producers by the end of next year. Supermarket chains have placed a heavy emphasis on compliance stating that they will no longer do business with European producers that are not certified in the Eurepgap program by the end of 2003.

Involvement in a certified IFP program will probably be used by buyers as a tool of differentiation

Although US growers have not yet been given the same ultimatum, the Norton Folgate representatives at the meeting stated that involvement in a certified IFP program would probably be used as a tool of differentiation in purchasing fruit from American producers in the future.

Eurepgap stands for European Good Agricultural Practices. The program monitors food safety, labor standards, pesticide safety and other farm related items. For the most part our current IFP program will meet most Eurepgap standards. The main deficiency in our program is that it is not accredited and growers cannot currently be certified in meeting specified standards.

For that reason the IFP Committee has been meeting with representatives of the Oregon Department of Agriculture. The ODA is willing to become an accredited Eurepgap representative, able to certify growers and packers as meeting Eurepgap standards. This would mean that in order for growers to be a member of the IFP program in the future they would need to be inspected annually by the ODA.

Before certification is possible both the Mid-Columbia IFP program for cherries and the ODA would need to be accepted into the Eurepgap program. The IFP Committee is currently working towards that end. In this effort we are joining other foreign production areas including South Africa and New Zealand that are also seeking accreditation by Eurepgap.

Caution Needed When Spraying Near Vineyards

Although we all need to be careful not to allow spray drift to occur at any time, some of you farm in the general vicinity of vineyards and extra care is needed. Certain herbicides such as 2,4-D can cause extensive damage to commercial grape operations. 2,4-D is a very volatile herbicide. If you are farming near a vineyard you

should plan to have completed your 2,4-D applications prior to April 10th. Roundup can be used as a relatively safe substitute for 2,4-D.



Suggested Best Management Practices for Orchard Spraying

One of the requirements of the grant that provided funding for The Dalles area weather station network was the monitoring for the presence of pesticides in Mill Creek by the DEQ. Monitoring will begin prior to the delayed dormant spray to provide a base reading. Monitoring will also take place through the city of The Dalles in order to differentiate the pesticides applied by homeowners from orchardists.

Several years ago, after the DEQ discovered pesticide contamination in Hood River County waterways the following best management practices for spraying were written by OSU faculty and members of the Hood River Growers Shippers for distribution to Hood River growers.

Cultural Practices

Maintain a minimum of 20 feet between orchards and waterways including streams and ponds.

Decrease runoff that might contain pesticides by planting and maintaining cover crops to increase water penetration and intercept runoff.

Mixing and Loading

Mix and load sprayers in areas where runoff cannot occur. Maintain an air gap between filler pipes and sprayers to reduce backflow.

Rinse pesticide containers when filling sprayers and mix rinsate back into spray tank. Store rinsed plastic containers away from waterways and recycle, do not burn.

Do not overfill sprayers. Use anti-foaming agents to reduce the risk of spillage.

Apply spray-tank rinse water back into the or-

chard; do not drain it in one spot.

Clean up spills immediately. Have spill absorbent material (cat litter, sawdust, etc.) available when mixing and loading.

Maintenance & Calibration

Maintain and service equipment on a regular basis to avoid leaks, especially valves and hoses.

Calibrate sprayers to avoid over-application and reduce drift.

Application

Minimize drift to waterways by increasing droplet size, using drift retardant, and avoiding application in high winds.

Turn off nozzles at the end of each tree row.

Starting this spring the DEQ will be monitoring Mill Creek for pesticide contamination

Make all efforts to eliminate drift near the edge of the orchard. When spraying rows parallel to sensitive areas spray only the outside of the outer two rows. Spray inwards at a lower speed for improved coverage. When spraying rows perpendicular to sensitive areas turn off nozzles two to three trees from end of each row. Then return to spray the last two to three trees inwards at a lower speed.

Apply dormant sprays with a minimum of 200 gallons of water per acre for increased droplet size and reduced drift.

Spray sensitive areas in the lowest wind conditions. When winds die down, move to these areas before finishing the rest of the block.

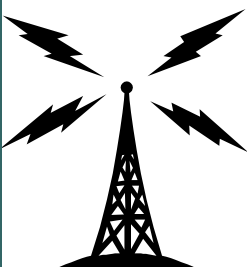
Fruit & Produce League Sponsors Frost Report

Once again the Wasco County Fruit & Produce League will be sponsoring the frost prediction report on KACI-AM and FM. The reports will begin March 25 and run through mid-May.

Listen to the report on **KACI-AM 1300** at 5:38 pm and 6:30 pm or

KACI-FM 97.7 at 5:24 pm and 6:24 pm. The report will also be available on the KACI phone line at 5 pm at 541-296-2211.

In addition KACI also broadcasts a report for the Hood River area on KACI-FM at 6:35 pm and 7:24 pm. Those reports are also available by phone after 12 noon by calling 541-386-1336.



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Miscellaneous Points of Interest



OBLR Traps: If you haven't already done so now is the time to order OBLR traps for this spring. Traps will cost approximately \$6.00 each. Call the Extension office at 296-5494 to place your order.



Pest Management Guides: The 2002 Mid-Columbia Pest Management Guide is now available at the Wasco County Extension office. The guide is provided free of charge for members of the Wasco County Fruit and Produce League. The guide is also available online at the following site:<http://eesc.orst.edu/agcomwebfile/edmat/EM8203.pdf>.



Orchard Manager's Meeting: Weekly Orchard Manager's meetings are now in progress every Friday morning at 6:30. The meetings are being held at Cousins Restaurant in The Dalles and will continue through mid-May. If you are not currently receiving a weekly reminder and would like to be informed of the topic, please call the Extension office at 296-5494 with that request.

Canada Competes for World IFP Market

Developing national standards that will help Canadian-grown apples take a bigger bite out of the marketplace is the aim of a new project that recently received financial backing from the Canadian government.

“This measure will increase the competitiveness of Canadian-produced apples,” stated Lyle Vanclief, Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister. “By using enhanced national IFP techniques, Canada’s 2,500 commercial apple farmers will be a model for other fruit sectors. The result will be more

Canadians eating Canadian fruit, and more competitive Canadian fruit in world markets.”

“The result will be more Canadian fruit in world markets”

The IFP initiative will set out voluntary guidelines and standards for soil management, irrigation, integrated pest management practices, harvesting, grower education and environmental farm practices. The national standard will be customized for each of Canada’s apple-growing regions. Also included in the program is the development of ‘scorecards’ for the implementation of the guidelines as well as a voluntary monitoring and auditing program.

“Our goal is for Canada to be the world leader in food safety, innovation and environmentally responsible production,” Mr. Vanclief said.

Article taken from news release — Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada: Federal Government Provides Funding for Integrated Fruit Production

