

HORT UPDATE

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Coming Attractions

February

22-Mar.15	Basic Math for Pest Applicators-Spanish	Hood River, <i>CGCC HR Center</i>
26	Core Pesticide Training (<i>English</i>)	The Dalles, <i>Orchard View Farms</i>
26	Pesticide Safety (<i>Spanish</i>)	The Dalles, <i>Orchard View Farms</i>
29	Blueberry Pruning Workshop	Hood River

March

7	Orchard Managers' Meetings begin (These meetings will continue on Friday mornings through May 9)	The Dalles, <i>Casa el Mirador, The Dalles, 6:30am</i>
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Pre-Harvest Practices to Improve Post-Harvest Fruit Quality

Last month we were privileged to have Professor Juan Pablo Zoffoli from the Catholic University of Santiago, Chile, speak at the Oregon Horticulture Society and CGFG Cherry Day meeting. Juan Pablo's presentation on Pre-Harvest Practices that Improve Post-Harvest Fruit Quality was particularly valuable.

Juan Pablo has worked with a number of varieties including Lapins and Sweetheart to determine what can be done to reduce the incidence of pitting in these sensitive varieties. Last fall I heard him tell a group of Chilean growers that one reason why American cherry growers were having so many problems with pitting in Lapins was because we harvest the fruit too late. His research indicates that there is less pitting in Lapins, Sweetheart and Bing (see Figure 1) when fruit is harvested at the red mahogany stage.

He believes that color is the best indicator of harvest timing. Soluble solids and firmness both vary significantly from year to year depending on crop load and weather conditions.

Speaking of crop load, this is the other factor that Juan Pablo mentioned played a significant role in pitting. Trees where the leaf to fruit ratio was low (overset) had significantly more pitting than when the crop load was balanced (see Figure 2). For this reason it is clear that both Lapins and Sweetheart need to be pruned extremely hard, even on Mazzard rootstock, in order to reduce the potential for oversetting and the subsequent potential for pitting.

Finally, Juan Pablo mentioned that firmness alone was not an indicator of high quality fruit. He gave the example of Sweetheart which is always firm, yet is not always of high quality. The problem with cherries like Sweetheart and Van is that their skin lacks elasticity and is therefore more susceptible to pitting. Growing high quality Sweetheart cherries depends on a balanced crop load and proper harvest timing.

Pesticide Training Opportunities

Core Pesticide and Pre-License Training

A class for pesticide applicators and those wishing to obtain their pesticide license will be offered on Tuesday, February 26, 2008. The class will be held from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm, at the Orchard View Farms Lunch Room, located at 4055 Skyline Road, The Dalles.

Recertification credits for pesticide applicators have been submitted to both the Oregon Department of Agriculture and the Washington State Department of Agriculture. This class will be a pre-license training for those desiring to take the applicators test or a Core training for those who already have their license.

The Private Applicators test will be offered at 1:30 pm, on February 26, at Columbia Gorge Community College. Please call the Wasco County Extension Office at 541-296-5494 by Friday, February 22, if you plan to take the exam. There is a \$10 registration fee for the class payable at the door, but those wishing to take the exam need an extra \$20 plus picture identification.

Pesticide Safety Class Offered in Spanish

A Spanish language Pesticide Safety Class will be offered on Tuesday, February 26, 2008. The class will be held from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm, at the Orchard View Farms Lunch Room, located at 4055 Skyline Road, The Dalles.

Recertification credits for pesticide applicators have been submitted to both the Oregon Department of Agriculture and the Washington State Department of Agriculture. This class will cover pesticide labels and formulations, personal protective equipment and spray drift management.

Participants will be given a certificate of completion to verify their attendance at this safety training. There is no fee for the class and everyone is welcome, however, teaching will be exclusively in Spanish. The class is sponsored by the Oregon State University Extension Service office in The Dalles.

Basic Math for Pesticide Applicators

Columbia Gorge Community College is offering another course in Basic Math for Pesticide Applicators. The class, which is taught in Spanish, will meet on Friday afternoons, from 3-6 and Saturday mornings from 9-noon, February 22-March 15, at the Hood River Center, located at 616 Industrial Street in Hood River. Cost of the math class is \$84 and has limited capacity. Pre-registration is required by calling the community college at 541-506-6011.

Desmond O'Rourke Presentation Posted on Web

Dr. Desmond O'Rourke, Professor emeritus at Washington State University and world renowned tree fruit economist, was scheduled to speak at the recent Oregon Horticulture Society meeting in Portland. However, drifting snow grounded him in Pullman, and he was unable to either fly or drive to the meeting. He was scheduled to speak on *The Future of Sweet Cherry Markets in the U.S. and the World*. For those of you who would like to take a look at his presentation it is posted on the web. Go to my website at <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/wasco>. Follow the "Horticulture", "Orchard Economics" links. You also can come into the Extension Office and view it on one of our computers.

Blueberry Pruning Workshop

OSU Berry Crops Specialist, Bernadine Strik, will be leading this tour in Hood River, on February 29th, from 10am to 1pm. The tour will cover pruning both new and established blueberry bushes, as well as specific pruning needs of different varieties.

10 to 11:30 am - Moore Orchards, Mohr Drive, Hood River

Heading south on East Side Road, turn left onto Mohr Drive. Stay to the left on Mohr Drive until you reach several buildings and a bin lot. We will meet there and walk up to the field.

12 to 1 pm - K & D Kiyokawa Orchards, 4715 Green Road, Dee Flat

Heading south on the Dee Highway, turn right onto Lost Lake Road, then turn right onto Punchbowl, then left onto Green Road. Follow Green Road for about ½ mile, look for the new blueberry planting on the right.

For more information, call OSU Extension in Hood River (541-386-3343).