

OrganicA

a resource for organic apple production

Orchard Observations

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Greetings !

We are experiencing a stretch of sunny, warmer days and it finally seems like spring has arrived. So, it is time to get out into the orchards more and watch the glorious growing cycle proceed.

This is the first "Orchard Observations" for 2009. Similar to last year, these will be sent out via the OrganicA listserv and posted on the web at:

<http://www.uvm.edu/~organica/ListserveBlogs/listserveblogs.html>

As always, please send any comments and suggestions to me at: lorraine.berkett@uvm.edu

Before I get into what is happening in the two certified organic apple orchards that are part of the OrganicA project, I want to mention that during the winter information was posted to the OrganicA website (<http://www.uvm.edu/organica/>). As you may know, the OrganicA Project is funded by a grant from the USDA Integrated Organic Program. We started the project in 2006 and during the winter we pulled together a Progress Report which we posted on the website. In particular, you may be interested in the summary of research results and insights - basically, what we have learned so far in the project in terms of horticultural management, disease and insect management, soil health management, and the economics of production. The Progress Report can be found at:

<http://www.uvm.edu/~organica/OrganicAProject/2009ProgressReport/progress.html>

Stage of Development: Dormant to Silver Tip Bud Development across the Five Cultivars (Ginger Gold, Honeycrisp, Liberty, Macoun, Zestar!)



This was the most advanced bud development as of two days ago. This year we will be posting bud development of the five cultivars in each orchard in a table format on the web to track any differences among cultivars. The tables are at:

<http://www.uvm.edu/~organica/budstages09.html>



Above are pictures of Orchard 1 (left) and Orchard 2 (right) as they looked this week. As you may remember, Orchard 1 was planted with young trees from a nursery in 2006 and includes Ginger Gold, Honeycrisp, Liberty, Macoun and Zestar! on B.9 rootstock, except Honeycrisp which is on M.26. The trees are smaller than might be expected after three growing seasons because they were “headed-back” after planting so that all the trees were similar in size. Orchard 2 was “top-grafted” in 2006 with the same five cultivars as in Orchard 1. The original trees in Orchard 2 were planted in 1988 and included McIntosh and Liberty on M.26 rootstock.

In Orchard 1, the white plastic, wrap-around mouse guards have been removed and the trees have been minimally pruned. Orchard 2 also did not require much pruning. Orchard 2 has mouse guards that remain on the trees during the growing season (see picture below).



Orchard 2 tree with mouse guard and tarnished plant bug trap.

Traps have been placed in both orchards to monitor populations of Leafminers (red sticky trunk traps) and tarnished plant bugs (white sticky traps). We will be using standard IPM trap threshold levels for each type of trap. A summary of thresholds is at:

<http://orchard.uvm.edu/uvmapple/pest/2004IPMQuickSummaryForMonitoring.PDF>



Red trunk trap to monitor apple blotch leafminer population

You can see in the above picture that we have attempted to flail mow the orchard floor to chop up the overwintered leaves. This is a recommended practice that accelerates leaf decomposition which, in turn, reduces the overwintering inoculum for apple scab and potentially damages overwintering leafminer pupae. You can also see that we were not able to mow in the tree rows and thus were not able to chop up all the overwintering leaves -- this is not good. If we are successful in getting additional funding, we will be purchasing equipment that will better get to the leaves in the tree rows.



The remaining leaves, if they were infected with scab last year, will be the source of scab inoculum for this year. Although it is close to bud break, we will still try to rake as many of the remaining leaves into the drive row as feasible and chop them up.

At the end of this week we will be putting on a 2% oil application to the trees. This application is a physical pest management tool -- the oil coats overwintering insects and mite eggs on the trees suffocating them. Excellent coverage is important to be effective.

That is all for now ... Wishing everyone a great season !

IMPORTANT: It is the grower's responsibility to ensure that any crop production practice or material used in the orchard is acceptable in their particular state's organic certification program. Some materials deemed organically acceptable on the National List may not be acceptable in some states. Contact your [federally accredited certifying agency](#) to know what is acceptable and to ensure compliance with regulations in your state.

Where trade names or commercial products are used for identification, no discrimination is intended and no endorsement is implied. Always read the label before using any pesticide. **The label is the legal document for the product use. Disregard any information in this document if it is in conflict with the label.**

We Value Your Input and Want to Address Your Needs

Please send your comments and suggestions to lorraine.berkett@uvm.edu

For more information on the OrganicA Project please see:

<http://www.uvm.edu/organica/>

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