

# OrganicA

a resource for organic apple production

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## Orchard Observations

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Excitement in the orchards !

I just came in from a very exciting visit to the organic orchards ! The trees have really moved along in development given the warm weather we have had. The bud development ranged from early Tight Cluster on the Honeycrisp trees to late Tight Cluster on Ginger Gold ( with some of the clusters having a deep dark pink center).



Honeycrisp



Ginger Gold

**Insect Activity** -- I waited until this afternoon to walk the orchards to let the temperatures rise into the high 60's F in order to see what the level of insect activity would be. I was concerned that in Orchard 1, which in previous years has had high populations of **Tarnished Plant Bugs** (TPB), that I may find TPB feeding in the developing blossom clusters which would cause abortion of cluster development. Luckily, I only saw two blossom clusters (one in Orchard 1 and the other in Orchard 2) with one TPB in each. The exciting part is that I took a video of one of the TPB. I have uploaded the video to YouTube and it can be found at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yWbO0ljaiUg>

A picture of the damage caused by a TPB in a Ginger Gold blossom is below.



TPB damage

**Apple grain aphids** were observed in three blossoms in Orchard 2 (Liberty, Zestar! and Ginger Gold trees). Below is a picture of the Ginger Gold blossom with the aphids. Apple grain aphids usually do not cause harm to apple blossoms; the insects will soon move to other crops. Descriptions of this insect can be found at:

<http://www.canr.msu.edu/vanburen/faga.htm>

<http://www.virginiafruit.ento.vt.edu/AGA.html>



Apple Grain Aphids on Ginger Gold blossom

Ahh... Biological control is already occurring in the orchard ! A lady bug beetle was observed along with some dead aphids.



**Apple Scab** -- We have been lucky in that all of the wetting periods so far this growing season have not turned into infection periods in the organic orchards. With the warm weather we have had, degree days have been accumulating quickly. At our site it is estimated that we have accumulated about 250 degree days since Green Tip which translates to about 12% - 25% ascospore maturity. Between 300 DD - 700 DD is considered the 'accelerated' phase of ascospore maturity and a period of high risk for infection. We did apply a sulfur spray on Tuesday morning to protect the trees from potential infection with the coming rains tonight and this weekend.

**Weed Management** -- This afternoon, Terry Bradshaw was applying mulch in the tree rows in Orchard I. Below are pictures of application and rows before mulch and after mulch.



Mulch application



Row before Mulch



Row with Mulch

[I did take a video of the process of mulch application and will upload it to YouTube in the near future.]

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**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](mailto:lorraine.berkett@uvm.edu)

**For more information on the OrganicA Project please see:**

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

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