

# OrganicA

a resource for organic apple production

## Orchard Observations

Lorraine P. Berkett

May 15, 2009



Orchard 1



Orchard 2

The orchards have been in full bloom this week -- very beautiful ! It was good to see when I walked through the orchards this morning that the high winds we had yesterday (gusts up to 50 m.p.h) did not cause the petals to fall. The wind did knock out some of the limb spreaders that had been so nicely placed in the trees -- but that can be easily remedied.



Limb spreaders

This morning, Terry Bradshaw was finishing up a bloom assessment of each tree in each orchard. This information will factor into our thinning decision. Also, as part of our research, we are trying to determine if there are any differences between the 5 cultivars in each orchard over time.



Terry Bradshaw assessing bloom

This week we helped out the bees by dusting the trees with “puffs” of pollen. Although we do have bees on the farm, it has been a standard practice on the farm for a number of years to apply pollen and we have continued this practice in Orchard 1 and 2.



Morgan Cromwell applying pollen “puff”

**Apple Scab** -- We had two infection periods last week (May 7 and May 9) in the orchards and prior to that, we had a potential, borderline infection period on May 1-2. The rain we had yesterday initiated another scab infection period. Presently, cumulative ascospore maturity is estimated at about 75%. We are still in the ‘accelerated’ phase of ascospore maturity and a period of high scab risk. Hopefully, the trees have been protected from infection by the lime sulfur or sulfur we have applied.

**Fire Blight** -- We are using the Maryblyt computer program to estimate the risk for fire blight blossom infection this year as we have done in previous years. The program predicted a

“high” risk of infection yesterday with the rain. The only factor that was below “threshold” was a factor related to the surface bacterial population size -- this is a good thing. In other words, only 3 of the 4 factors necessary for infection were predicted; it takes all 4 factors (open blossoms, a wetting event, aver. daily temp. of 60F or greater, and conditions that have allowed the bacteria to build up) for infection to occur. It also appears that for the next six days only 2-3 of the factors will be present. Our cool temperatures have again saved us from allowing the bacteria to build up to a threshold levels that would trigger an infection.

**Insect Activity** -- As of this morning, the blossoms and foliage are looking good. The only insect damage observed was a blossom here and there with **Green Pug Moth (GPM)** larval damage. The damaged is well below threshold and the larvae have left the trees.



Damage caused by GPM larvae

We are planning to start to apply kaolin next week to build up a residue to deter **Plum Curculio** damage. We are also going to continue a close watch for **European Apple Sawfly** activity.

---

**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/>

**The Organica Project is being funded by a grant from the  
USDA Integrated Organic Program**