



NEW HAMPSHIRE VEGETABLE, BERRY & TREE FRUIT NEWSLETTER

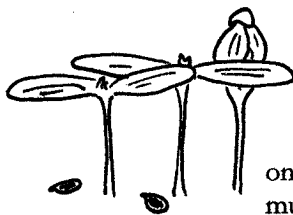
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GEORGE HAMILTON, EXTENSION SPECIALIST; TREE FRUITS

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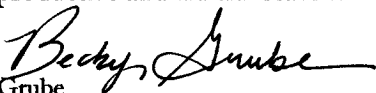
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NEWS & INTRODUCTION

UNH Cooperative Extension now has two specialists serving NH fruit and vegetable growers! Becky Grube is responsible for Small Fruits, Vegetables, and Sustainable Agriculture and is based in Durham, and George Hamilton is now responsible for Tree Fruits and will remain in Hillsborough. We both are enjoying working together to provide more of the resources that NH growers need. This bulletin, the new Vegetable, Berry & Tree Fruit Newsletter, will be a collaborative effort. Our mission is to keep you posted on relevant information we learn throughout the year. We welcome your input on how we can best serve you, through this newsletter or otherwise. Please contact either of us with suggestions for topics that you'd like us to cover. It seems fitting that this first issue falls at the start of the growing year – we wish you a productive and fruitful season!


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MUMMY BERRY CONTROL IN BLUEBERRIES

As many of you know, blueberry mummy berry disease was a major problem in 2003 and 2004. The mummy berry fungus overwinters in mummified fruit

on the ground. In the spring, spores are produced by mushroom-like apothecia on mummified fruit, and are spread by wind. Under cool and wet conditions, these spores infect green shoots and cause twig blight (primary infection). More spores are produced by infected twigs and leaves. These can then infect blossoms and the fruit they produce (secondary infection). Infected fruits start to develop normally, but turn pinkish and shrivel instead of ripening.

Raking under the bushes very early in the season to disturb the apothecia before they release spores can be effective. Another control strategy is spring mulching to bury the mummies and apothecia. Application of lime sulfur, urea, or concentrated fertilizer to the soil surface to 'burn' the apothecia.

If fungicides are required, applications should begin at bud break, or at the early green tip stage of growth, to prevent primary infections. The material should be reapplied at the recommended interval (10-14 days, for Indar). Indar 75 WSP currently appears to be the most effective fungicide for controlling the disease. ***Effective March 21, 2005, the EPA has approved an emergency use (Section 18) label for the fungicide Indar (fenbucanazole) to control this disease in New Hampshire.*** The emergency use label is available through distributors, or you can contact us for a copy. An important note - this exemption is only good through August, 2005. It is imperative that you follow the restrictions on the label, and that you maintain records of the location, rate, and date of any Indar applications. We must have this information at the end of the season in order to apply for another Section 18 label in 2006.

Two reminders: **Indar is not labeled for control of other diseases in blueberry, and use of Orbit (propiconazole) is not legal in NH!**

WHITE MOLD OR SCLEROTINIA DROP PROBLEMS? CONSIDER BIOCONTROL...

The fungus *Sclerotinia sclerotiorum* causes white mold or stem rot on beans, cabbage, potato, tomato, sunflower, and carrot, lettuce drop, and many more diseases. It overwinters as resting bodies (sclerotia) in the soil, which germinate and infect at the soil line in cool, moist weather. Sclerotia can also form tiny mushroom-like structures that produce airborne spores that infect leaf tissues. Like weed seeds, the sclerotia populations can build up and remain viable in infested soils for several years.

Cultural practices can greatly reduce infection. Maintaining good air movement is key, by spacing plants well. Minimizing moisture on the soil surface also helps. Because most plants are hosts of *Sclerotinia*, rotation often won't help. Avoiding extremely susceptible varieties – both of crop plants and cover crops – helps. Effective chemical controls usually include soil treatment to prevent sclerotia from germinating or foliar treatments to reduce infection after sclerotia have germinated.

Two organically-acceptable biocontrols are available to combat *Sclerotinia* – a bacterium, *Bacillus subtilis*, marketed as Serenade (AgraQuest)– and a fungus, *Coniothyrium minitans*, marketed as Contans WG (Sylvan Bioproducts). Serenade has generally given poor control of *Sclerotinia*. Contans appears more promising, but has given mixed results. Studies suggest that Contans is most effective when it is applied early and populations of this organism can build up and colonize soils. Although both are OMRI-listed for organic production, only Serenade is currently registered in NH. We are pursuing registration of Contans in NH, and expect that it will be approved within the next few weeks. If you have a site that consistently has had white mold on any crop and would like to participate in a trial of this material, please contact Becky.

DISEASES ON THE HORIZON

Phytophthora blight (*Phytophthora capsici*) - As you plan your field rotations this year, pay attention to Phytophthora. This disease has been a major problem in recent years, in part because it has been very wet. The pathogen is a soilborne water mold and its spores require standing water. As a result, water management is key to controlling this disease. Avoiding wet spots with susceptible crops will help,

and if wet spots are unavoidable, manipulating the field in order to promote good drainage is critical. Because it infects crops in the Solanaceae (primarily pepper, but also eggplant) and Cucurbits (squashes, cukes, melons), avoid planting these plants back-to-back.

THE NH FRUIT PEST UPDATE HOTLINE

Alan Eaton's New Hampshire Fruit Pest Update Telephone line is now in operation for 2005. You can dial (603) 862-3763 any time, day or night, through Sept. 15. to get information about pests, crop development, and upcoming meetings! Alan will record a new message every Tuesday.

TWILIGHT MEETINGS

We have an excellent lineup of twilight meetings for vegetables, berries and/or tree fruits scheduled for 2005. These include meetings at farms in Bradford, East Conway, and Keene, as well as at the UNH Research Farm in Durham. Save the dates! Bulletins with more details will be mailed as the dates approach. For those of you in eastern NH, also consider coming to the Fryeburg, ME meeting in June!

UPCOMING NH EVENTS & MEETINGS

Wed. Apr. 14, **Tree Fruit Twilight Meeting**, Hollis, NH. Contact George Hamilton (603)641-6060.
Thurs. Jun.16, **Stoneridge Farm Twilight Meeting**. Bradford, NH. Contact Sadie Puglisi (603)225-5505.
Mon. Jul.11, **Sherman Farm Twilight Meeting**. E. Conway, NH. Contact Tina Savage (603)539-3331.
Tues. Jul. 26, **Green Wagon Farm Twilight Meeting**. Keene, NH. Contact Carl Majewski (603)352-4550.
Tues. Aug.16, **UNH Horticultural Farm Twilight Meeting**. Durham, NH. Contact Cheryl Estabrooke (603)862-3200.

OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS

Wed. Apr 20. **Spring Wine Grape Growers' Workshop**. Westport, MA. Contact Hilary Sandler, (508) 295-2212 ext. 21 or email hsandler@umext.umass.edu.
Wed. May 4, **Alternative Energy on the Farm Forum**. Randolph Center, VT. Contact Vern Grubinger (802) 257-7967 ext. 13.
Wed. Jun.15, **Weston Farm Twilight Meeting**. Fryeburg ME. Contact Mark Hutton (207) 933-2100 or visit <http://www.westonsfarm.com/>.
Thurs-Sun Aug.11-14, **NOFA (Northeast Organic Farming Association) Summer Conference**, Amherst, MA. Phone (978)355-2853 or email nofa@nofamass.org.