

Blueberry Information

Blueberries and Hurricane Floyd

Damage to blueberry bushes in NC appears to be minor. I was able to reach the blueberry weather stations and production areas yesterday (23 Sep 99) for the first time since the storm; a week after hurricane Floyd, the Black River is still across many roads. Surprisingly, all fields visited in Rowan and White Lake yesterday had drained out fairly well and very little standing water remained. Foliage lost to high winds was minimal, at most 5-10% which is much less than with hurricane Fran in 1996. Fewer bushes were blown over this time. From a crop production standpoint the greatest loss to growers appears to be the work needed to reshape (bed up) rows, and to repair drains and waterways washed out by the storm. Since most leaves were retained, flower buds should be able to form adequately for at least a normal-sized crop in the year 2000. Flower bud set appears to be better than last year by this date. However, please note that some growers and farm workers were flooded out of their homes with much personal loss and continuing hardship. Many homes and some businesses are still flooded and are only accessible by boat.

Sharpnosed Leafhopper Sprays

Late September is a critical time for control of sharpnosed leafhopper, the vector for the blueberry stunt phytoplasma. If you have had problems with blueberry stunt in the past or if you are growing blueberries in the commercial production area (southeastern NC), you should consider applying insecticide sprays to control this pest. The third and largest generation of leafhoppers builds up in September and October and subsides with cold weather. Labeled insecticides include malathion and esfenvalerate (Asana XL).

Blueberry Meetings in Michigan

November 8-9 -- Michigan State University Blueberry School, "Growing and Marketing Quality Blueberries", Kellogg Biological Station, Hickory Corners, MI. Contact Eric Hanson, (517) 355-2261, hanson@msu.edu

November 10-11 -- National Blueberry Conference and Exposition, Grand Center, Grand Rapids, MI. Lynn Kelly, (616) 434-6791

November 11-13 -- North American Blueberry Council Fall Meeting, Amway Grand Plaza Hotel, Grand Rapids, MI. NABC, (916) 933-0399

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