Volume XII, Number 9, September 5, 1998

LATE BLOOM

In late August I heard from several growers that some beds in the Cranmoor and Warrens areas were producing flowers again. I heard estimates as high as 10% of the uprights were flowering again. That sounded pretty significant to me so I made some time to investigate.

I visited three different growers in Central Wisconsin and looked carefully at their beds. I was able to find an occasional flower here and there on all the cultivars we examined, but it certainly wasn't 10% in bloom, perhaps 0.01% in bloom. I wouldn't order more bees just yet.

For the most part the uprights that I saw in flower weren't "umbrella bloom". The terminal bud had produced additional growth of leaves and stems so the flowers weren't terminal on the uprights. In some cases pinhead and larger fruit were developing. It was still green and very small and will almost certainly be sorted out by size in the harvest and cleaning process. Some of these new uprights were beginning to show development of a new terminal bud.

What effect will this late bloom have on next year's crop? Given the small amount of late bloom that I saw I don't think it will have any effect. If we have a late fall so there is sufficient warmth, new terminal buds will set that will still produce flowers next year. In most cases I think the new terminal, if one is produced, will be vegetative. However, given the spotty nature of this late bloom it still shouldn't be significant next year.

What caused the late bloom to develop? I wish I had a firm answer. I suspect that many years we get a little of this in late August and early September. We saw this in New Jersey a couple of years ago with about the same incidence, but with more "umbrella bloom". Though I don't have any hard data to back up my statements, our long and warm (but not hot) season has brought this on. Certainly New Jersey has warm long summers more often that Wisconsin does. Perhaps it is also a response to a certain amount of stress. Let me cite a couple of examples in apples that may apply here.

Many years in Madison the crab apple trees that are planted in the boulevards flower a second time in the fall. This is brought about because the trees are defoliated by apple scab by mid summer and sometimes a second flush of growth induces the buds to break and produce some few flowers. This is a stress response. In some subtropical areas apples are grown even though enough chilling hours are never accumulated. They induce the trees to flower by manually defoliating the trees. This causes stress and a new flush of

leaves and flowers and subsequently apples are produced.

Is there anything that can be done to avoid this from happening in the future? Short of regulating the weather I don't think so. This isn't a very "researchable" topic either because it is impossible to predict when it will occur (unless you can predict these temperate el Nino summers). Given different conditions next summer I will be very surprised if we have a significant amount of late bloom next year.

Teryl Roper, UW-Madison Extension Horticulturist

HARVEST PREPARATIONS

With the harvest season approaching many jobs are being done to prepare for the culmination of the 1998 season. Harvest is a hectic, yet an exciting time of year. Because so much activity takes place in a short period of time it is essential that careful planning precedes harvest.

Consider including equipment safety and training in your harvest preparations. Perhaps the first step is to take a look at the equipment you will be using for harvest. Make sure any original guards or shields are in place and functional. See if any additional guards or shields are needed. If guards or shields are not practical make the danger obvious by surrounding it with bright paint and a warning label. If people don't need to be working near moving parts then put up a temporary barrier such as cones and tape to keep people out. Make sure employees have appropriate personal protective equipment as dictated by their work (safety glasses, gloves, hearing protection).

Where safety is concerned prevention is far preferred to reco very. Seasonal employees come onto the marsh for harvest and they may not be completely familiar with your operation and equipment so some training for the work they will be doing is essential. It is not a safe assumption that seasonal workers (or others) know about equipment safety, even if they grew up on a farm. Begin by demonstrating exactly what it is you want them to do (and not to do?). Make sure they know how to properly run any equipment they will operate and to point out any potential hazards with the equipment. If they'll be working around equipment they won't be operating make sure they know the hazards of that equipment as well. Make sure to ask questions to ascertain if they understand the instruction you have given them. You'll want to observe periodically to make sure appropriate procedures are being followed or have one of your supervisors do this task and then get a report back. Be aware of close calls as this indicates the need for equipment modification or more training.

Document the training that is given. Documentation could be as simple as a grid with employee names on the left side and training topics above each column. Have the employee initial for each training topic they receive. Perhaps most important, you must set a good example. If you do unsafe things your employees may well follow your example.

Teryl Roper, UW-Madison, Extension Horticulturist

LADY BUG NEWS

Our year began with a bang. The following information is from the Cooperative Pest Survey Bulletin from WCATCP. Degree days for May 1, 1998 were:

City	1998	1997
LaCrosse	270	184
Port Edwards	238.5	160
Big Flats	264	132
Wausau	206	97

Degree days for August 28, 1998 were:

City	1998	1997
LaCrosse	2644	2178
Port Edwards	2196	1927
Big Flats	2281	2080
Wausau	2181	1703

As you can see we did not lose any ground during our growing season. With the early spring and beautiful growing weather we will reap the benefits. Just take a good look at your fruit size this year. The fruit is weighing in remarkably well. They are thick walled and meaty. Our fruit still has plenty of weight gain right up until harvest, so just imagine what potential we have out there.

Following are the results of 720 square foot samples harvested from Wood, Jackson, Juneau, Monroe, Portage and Adams counties. We invested 100 man-hours to pull this information together as a means of forecasting individual grower crops and to do a comparison from six different counties. Note the growing degree days and know that the environment is not exactly the same but put together the 1998 crop for Wisconsin will be very NICE! Always remember that we sell our crimson harvest by weight and then take a good look at the 1995-96-97 berry weights. Yes, we have been blessed with an exceptional growing year!

All the ladies on the Lady Bug IPM Team wish each of you a very successful harvest and bountiful crimson crop.

Jayne Sojka, Lady Bug IPM

Results of 720 square foot samples from six different Wisconsin counties.

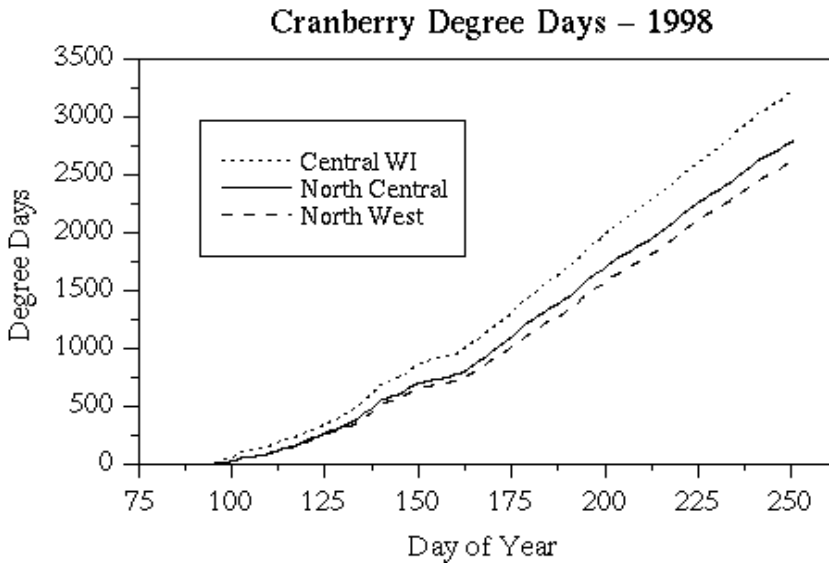
Cultivar	Mean # berries/ sq. ft.	Mean fruit wt/sq. ft. (g)	Mean wt/berry (g)
Ben Lear	197	223.9	1.14
Searles	176	173.5	0.99
Stevens	195	250.9	1.29
Pilgrim	196	259.3	1.32
Bergman	232	238	1.03
Beckwith	205	200	0.98
Lemunyons	171	208.5	1.22
Howes	143	130.1	0.91
McFarlins	167	153.6	0.92
Crowley	131	107	0.82
Native	140	95.8	0.69

Prior year results

Cultivar	1997	1996	1995
Stevens	0.97	0.74	1.2
LeMunyon	0.86	0.78	1.13
Pilgrim	0.89	0.73	1.05
Ben Lear	0.82	0.71	1.05
Searles	0.76	0.54	0.89
McFarlin	0.66	0.47	0.84
Howes	0.57	0.45	0.75
Natives	0.59	0.63	
Crowley	0.57	0.41	

I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat. Assuredly we bring not innocence into the world, we bring impurity much rather: that which purifies us is trial, and trial is by what is contrary.

Milton



Wisconsin Cranberry Crop Management Newsletter
Dept. of Horticulture
1575 Linden Drive
Madison, WI 53706-1590

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