



“Working with the Grower to Create Healthy Orchards”



Puriri Moth seen in Rotorua

Newsletter February 2022

From the Office

Last week, we had our annual audit, passing with flying colours. Thank you Argine for all your hard work, making sure everything runs smoothly in the office.

David’s health has not been good for the last few months. He is hoping to have heart surgery very soon, then will be bouncing back to full health. Again, we want to thank our lovely staff for looking after everyone so well while we are going through these challenges. Cathy is still available to talk to you, otherwise talk to your monitor and they will contact Cathy if they cannot answer your question.

China Growers

We recently had someone suggest they were not China compliant because they were monitoring with us and not monitoring with a certain packhouse. We are scratching our heads and wondering where that story has come from as we are definitely China compliant, confirms by our audit last week, and as long as you take action as we recommend on your monitoring sheet, in conjunction with advice from your packhouse, your orchard is compliant for export to China.

As a note to the above statement, it is up to you to make sure you chase up your monitor to make sure they know whether you are spraying or you want a remonitor well before the 28 day monitoring sheet expires.



Bug Update—Avocados

Leafroller - We have been seeing a lot of Leafroller this year, which is now on the young fruit. To spray now, you must have a current monitoring report.

Greenhouse Thrip – Thrip have arrived earlier than usual and with the recent rain, are now around in high numbers already. You can now apply back to back sprays about 14 days apart, using different chemicals, if you have a monitoring sheet to justify a spray. Also be aware of shelter belts as these can harbour high numbers of Thrip. It’s looking like there could be a lot of Thrip around this year, so wise timing of sprays will be critical. Also you need to be aware that too many Thrip sprays, will reduce the number of Beneficial’s and allow the build up of Mite numbers.

NZ Flower Thrip - Still Flower Thrip are only seen occasionally.

Six Spotted Mite - Most orchards have low number of mites, or none. However, there was an orchard last week with higher numbers than desirable. If you have high numbers of mites, also look at the number of Stethorus on the report, as they are the main predator of mites. As a secondary pest, mites take advantage of lots of Thrip sprays, which wipe out their natural predators.

Scale - It is important to check whether scale are alive or dead. We are aware of one orchard that has consistently had high scale numbers, even after a number of sprays. Our staff always check for live or dead scale, and in this situation, they were still over threshold after applying a few different chemicals.

Fullers Rose weevil (FRW) damage and live - Fullers are around, but not in high numbers this year, with damage also being low.

Mealybug - many Mealybug are around, but again are being seen singly, not in clusters, so we are not required to record them.

Natural Predators—Many of the Blueberry growers have been regularly releasing predators over the last month and we are seeing very good results, with reduced numbers of Thrip and mites.



Lilac bush in our garden



Regular news and updates, can be found on our website or our Facebook page.



Safety News

Things to be aware of now are long grass, which is hiding holes, sloping ground, broken branches. The ideal grass length for us is no more than mid calf. Some length in the grass, helps keep moisture in the soil when the moisture levels are down, but grass and weeds that are over a metre high are a little too high, slowing down our staff, filling up our boots with seeds and scratching our legs. Plus hiding other hazards.

Are you pruning or picking? Please let our staff know.



Spraying? We will hold off monitoring your orchard for 14 days after most sprays or 30 days after a Paramite spray. Please also let us know about weed sprays, particularly over summer when staff are wearing shorts and sneakers.

This applies to Blueberries too. If you have sprayed in the last 14 days, especially with an insecticide. Please let us know when we contact you about a visit.

Blueberries—This current weather, both dry and damp, is causing many issues. We have been seeing plants and fruit affected by the dry, particularly in the Waikato. It looks like there is going to be some good rain next week to relieve the parched soil.

The damp weather is bringing an increase in Greenhouse thrip numbers. It will be a testing time for the next couple of months, till the end of harvest, to achieve enough control of the Thrip.

Cathy has been putting in many hours working on a presentation to go on the BBNZ website as soon as we can. We have included some tables showing when we have found insects and diseases over the last 2 years. We will add to this data as it becomes available. It is very interesting seeing the clear pest pressures on the charts. Cathy is checking the presentation with some leaders in the Blueberry industry before sending it to Samantha at BBNZ.



Caz monitoring in a tunnel house.



Weather events



Our weather guru is predicting quite wet weather for the first half of February, with the full La Nino weather pattern kicking in. You can check our Facebook page for weather updates.

Recipe

Rhubarb is often a forgotten fruit hiding somewhere in our garden, while we enjoy other fruit. For those of you that like a nice moist cake, here is a treat.

Rhubarb Sour Cream Cake



5 tablespoons butter

1 & 1/2 cups of soft brown sugar (is quite sweet, so you may want to add a bit less)

Cream together, then add

2 eggs

Beat, then add

280 grams sour cream 2 tsp cinnamon

Vanilla 1 lemon—juice and rind

3 small cups of flour

Fold in, then add

1 tsp Baking Soda dissolved in a splash of milk

Stir into mixture, then add

5 stalks of rhubarb chopped into cubes.

Pour into lined tin, sprinkle with soft brown sugar and bake 1 1/4 hours at 160—180 c being careful not to burn the sugar on top. Serve hot with icecream or cold with yoghurt or crème fraiche.

Please note: Even though we have good knowledge in insects, we cannot advise you to stop spraying and use only predators. We also cannot advise you what chemicals to spray. Please work with your industry advisers for best advice.

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Crop Monitoring



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Argine and Caz monitoring Blueberries in the Waikato



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