

It's our people that make the difference

STRAWBERRIES

- We are starting to see the results of the extremely low temperatures delivered by the 'Beast from the East'. However, as you can see from the pictures (right), the degree of damage to crowns is varied so you need to assess carefully what damage may have been done if you haven't done so already. We recorded -7°C in Kent, the West Midlands and East Anglia, but we are aware of reported temperatures below -10. Also, for 2-3 days temperatures struggled to get above freezing, meaning that plants were well and truly frozen right through.
- In early forced crops, there are already Two-Spotted Spider Mite females coming out of diapause and laying eggs (pictured, right). With Apollo no longer having an EAMU for use in strawberry, both Borneo and Floramite have activity on eggs as well as motile stages. *Phytoseiulus persimilis* needs relative humidity greater than 75% and the temperature above 20°C for some hours of the day, so heated glass is the only likely scenario where you can introduce it this early in the season. In glasshouses, *Neoseiulus californicus* can be introduced and it is much more tolerant of lower humidity and also pesticide applications. It cannot be used in polytunnels.
- If using Nemasys L for Vine Weevil control, add [Transformer](#) to improve water penetration into the substrate or soil.



RASPBERRIES

- Cane disease sprays should be going on now. If you have any Deacon (MAPP 14270) in stock, this needs to be used up by 30th April.
- Residual herbicide applications should have been completed by now for outdoor crops and certainly before bud burst.
- The cold weather has lowered substrate temperatures and early crops are struggling to take up enough iron (see picture, right). [Solufeed Rapid](#) through the irrigation has proved very effective, but the crop may not need much water at the moment so a foliar application of Metalosate Iron or Maxicrop + Iron would then be helpful.



BLACKCURRANTS

- Residual herbicide must be applied before bud burst, so now that the snow is gone (Scotland excepted!), this job must be completed.
- Get sulphur in stock as it will soon be time to start applications on the earliest varieties. The amount of Big Bud in plantations has slowly been creeping up in the last few years, so make sure you apply robust rates, together with Wetcit to get very good coverage
- Winter chill has been adequate for all but the late varieties, and if you plan to apply dormancy breaking sprays, they must be done before any leaf emerges.

BLUEBERRIES

- Blueberry buds should not have been affected by the cold even if they have started to move as they need temperatures of -9°C or lower to be seriously damaged. If there is sign of damage, you may need to apply a protectant fungicide such as Signum to prevent infection by Phomopsis twig blight.
- Pruning needs to be completed as soon as possible, as the later you prune, the higher the risk of disease coming in to pruning cuts with warmer weather.