

It's our people that make the difference

STRAWBERRIES

- Rain last week will have increased humidity in tunnels, and a warmer, sunnier week will increase Powdery Mildew risk, especially in newly planted material where there is fresh soft, growth.
- Likewise, the increase in humidity will raise the risk of Botrytis, so with picking underway in many forced early crops, keep a close eye on rots when picking and use short harvest interval fungicides to maintain adequate control. Make sure your pickers are alert to rotting fruit not presented over the truss support tape. It is very important that they are removed as they will be a source of infection. This can be more of a problem in troughs than bags (see right).
- With a considerable amount of fruit ripening over the next 10 days, calcium sprays should be applied to prevent leaf tip burn, and to improve fruit firmness and shelf life.



RASPBERRIES

- Raspberry Beetle can be expected in crops imminently. Traps will give you early warning and help timing of insecticide application (Calypso or Decis Protech).
- Caterpillars are still active in some raspberry and blackberry crops. Explicit will give good control but do not use it on crops in flower as it is harmful to bumblebees. Hives should be removed and returned 3 days after application.
- Downy Mildew risk in blackberry will be high with increased humidity. Amistar has protectant activity. FytoSave is also expected to have activity against Downy Mildew, but it must be applied as a protectant in a programme of at least 3 sprays (7-10 days apart) to be effective. The MRL for phosphonic acid (phosphite) on blackberry (and raspberry) has recently been increased from 100 to 300 mg/kg. It remains at 2 mg/kg for Rubus hybrids.

BLACKCURRANTS

- After a wet week, Leaf Spot risk will have been high.
- Woolly Currant Scales are starting to lift (pictured near right) but it is too early to treat. Wait for the crawlers to emerge and then spray with Calypso.
- The Capatex Mater-Bi biodegradable mulch is being used for new plantations (vines pictured far right) and is available from Hutchinsons.



BLUEBERRIES

- Immediately after flowering is a good time to apply slug pellets to reduce the population to ensure there is limited damage closer to harvest. This is mainly a problem in outdoor crops. You have until 30th June to purchase metaldehyde pellets (and then 12 months to use them up). Iroxx based on ferric phosphate can be used. Note that not all the ferric phosphate products have fruit crops on the label.
- As flowering comes to an end, make sure you apply a botryticide, as the petals have a habit of sticking to fruits and could be a source of infection.
- Any bushes which have been affected by frost or are infected with stem or twig blight (*Phomopsis* or *Botryosphaeria*) should have the damaged material pruned out. Protect the bushes with applications of Signum or Switch.

MISCELLANEOUS

- Vivian Powell has recently retired from the AHDB. She may be an 'unsung' heroine to many growers as she has led the AHDB (and previously the HDC) minor uses programme and has shepherded hundreds of EAMUs (previously SOLAs) through the regulatory maze. You may see the approvals appear in your inbox or recommended by your agronomist, but there is sometimes a lot of blood, sweat and tears to get the authorisations past the regulators. We wish Viv a long and happy retirement and you can listen to a podcast interview with her recorded on her final day at the AHDB [here](#).
- The East Kent Fruit Society Soft Fruit Walk this year is at Clockhouse Farm, Cox Heath, by kind permission of Robert Pascall, on 11th June at 5.00 p.m. More details [here](#) or contact the Secretary, Tracey Rose on traceyrose7@btinternet.com

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