

It's our people that make the difference

STRAWBERRIES

- With a major temperature change, protected crops will come under very high Powdery Mildew and *Botrytis* pressure. Venting will be important to control humidity and you may need to close up spray intervals as leaf and fruit development will be rapid. Keeping a satisfactory RH is also important for pollen viability. **Kelpak** will also improve pollen tube growth. **Megafof** will also help with the stress of temperature change.
- Likewise, thrips populations could increase rapidly, so make sure you have enough *Neoseiulus cucumeris* in the crop. There has probably been insufficient temperature for the first generation of introduced mites to have laid many eggs yet, so you will need to top-up to keep up with any thrips population explosion.
- Not surprisingly, Two Spotted Spider Mite and aphid populations could take off as well, so close crop monitoring and prompt action will be necessary.
- Rapid growth could lead to some nutrient deficiency symptoms. Iron deficiency could occur as roots will be sitting in cold substrate. Foliar application is the quickest way to remedy the situation, but also using **Solufeed Rapid** in the feed, has proved very successful. Other foliar feeds will be important. A rapidly developing canopy will be a strong pull for calcium, away from fruit, so you should be starting **Calmax Ultra** applications from the start of flowering.

RASPBERRIES

- Check shoot tips for Raspberry Sawfly larvae.
- Large Raspberry Aphid has been found in protected crops (pictured, right).
- Don't forget your Cane Midge traps.
- Temperatures should be sufficient this week to start introducing *Phytoseiulus persimilis* in unheated tunnel crops for control of Two Spotted Spider Mite. With limited leaf area, it is better to treat hot spots, as the ability for the predatory mites to move will be restricted without plant to plant contact.
- Blackberry should be getting a robust Downy Mildew programme at present.



BLACKCURRANTS

- Due to the loss of Systhane 20EW and its usefulness on Leaf Spot, LRS have changed their approved pesticide list, now permitting the use of Corbel/Clayton Spigot in the season. However, they have asked that you only use 2 applications pre-harvest, no less than 21 days apart and no later than 28 days before harvest. The **EAMU** permits a 14 day spray interval and 14 day harvest interval.
- With all the rain, Leaf Spot infection risk is high. Just a reminder that there are two types of leaf spot seen in the UK. *Drepanopeziza ribis* is the 'traditional' leaf spot and *Mycosphaerella ribis* is the 'Septoria' leaf spot. Varieties affected include Ben Hope, Lomond and Kilbreck. As well as Clayton Spigot, Signum or Switch will give good protection.
- Check plantations for Winter Moth and Currant Leaf Blister Aphid.
- Gooseberries should be getting Leaf Spot and Powdery Mildew treatments. Early varieties such as Careless should also be getting a *Botrytis* fungicide.

BLUEBERRIES

- Brown scale (shown on a cane, right) will start making a messy goo soon in protected crops, which indicates the females are feeding prior to egg laying. A Calypso will deal with this pest.
- Keep checking for tortrix moth activity as there will not be much time left for a caterpillar spray before flowering on outdoor crops.
- Watch out for aphids on protected crops which could increase rapidly with a step change in temperatures.
- Vine Weevil larvae are still being found in pots but will be pupating soon. Consider a little and often approach to applying nematodes from June onwards.



MISCELLANEOUS

- With a delayed spring, your bumblebees may be arriving earlier than you might want. They will be quite happy for a week without flowers, but you should feed them supplementary pollen. There should be a few more wildflowers for them to forage on during the next week.