

APPLES

It's our people that make the difference

- In what has proved a very difficult week for spraying orchards, there have been significant periods of potential scab infection for much of the week in all areas. Rain Sunday night will lead to another period, although the far east of the UK may escape further wet weather. Scala has a label claim for up to 72 hours kickback. At lower temperatures, the development of a scab infection will be much slower, so the kickback can be longer. Scala controls scab up to and including the stage when sub-cuticular stroma form in the leaf. In less susceptible varieties, this process is slower, so the kickback could be even greater still. Difference needs higher temperatures to be effective, and although they are forecast this week, it will be too late by the time they arrive. Discuss product choice and prioritise your orchards with your agronomist.
- Many cider apple growers will be spraying orchards for the first time this week. If you haven't managed to spray early varieties which reached bud burst a week ago, then you will need to put in some Scala as well as a protectant fungicide.
- Despite the cool temperatures, we continue to find signs of Apple Blossom Weevil activity (pictured, right). That will increase significantly with temperature above 15°C this week, so you must get control measures on for this pest this week. Caterpillars are becoming more apparent too, so you may need to control these as well.
- The first few Rosy Apple Aphids are appearing (pictured right, attended by some protective ants) and some orchards, especially in cider, have some high populations of Apple Grass Aphid (pictured far right).
- Weeds will grow fast this week, so after you have got on your fungicide and insecticide treatments, you should start to prioritise the weediest orchards.
- Rapid growth this week will stretch nutrient supply in the tree, so you should be starting to foliar feed dessert and culinary varieties. The rapid change from cold to warm conditions may also cause some stress. **Maxicrop Xtra-Fol** would be a good choice, but some urea would also be a useful option. Micro-nutrient nutrition will be coming to the fore, with boron being needed from green cluster stage. With trees sat in wet soils, some Phorce would also be advisable.



PEARS

- Expect Pear Sucker nymphs to become more obvious as they emerge from hiding in the developing buds, where they have been trying to keep warm.
- Again, foliar nutrition will be important as we move rapidly towards white bud this week.

PLUMS

- With damsons and early varieties starting to flower, and main varieties at white bud, thoughts should be turning to white bud sprays for Plum Leaf Curling Aphid, Brown Rot and Blossom Wilt.
- You should be having discussions with your agronomist about which orchards may need blossom thinning by application of ATS (Thio-S)

CHERRIES

- Expect rapid bud development this week and early varieties which have been covered for a while, will have flower open. You may need to vent tunnels. Remember that the higher the temperature, the shorter the effective pollination period for cherry. At temperatures above 20°C, the viability of the embryo sac in the flower ovule can be as little as 24 hours. Applying **Kelpak** will speed the growth of pollen tubes, improving fruit set.
- Black Cherry Aphid (pictured, right) is starting to be found. Get control before it gets out of hand. Calypso or Gazelle WG are your options.



MISCELLANEOUS

- The East Kent Fruit Society is holding a **Sprayer Workshop** at FAST, Brogdale on 24th April. The EKFS are also holding a **Blossom Walk** at Chandler and Dunn, Perry Farm, Preston on 8th May. Details available from the Secretary on 01795 530335 or traceyrose@btinternet.com