

APPLES

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- After a prolonged dry spell with very low scab risk, any rain over the weekend will have resulted in large and significant ascospore release. The degree of infection risk will depend on the duration of leaf wetness combined with temperature. You should be considering Scala or Difference to be applied with your next protectant fungicide application. Despite the relatively low risk, we have had scab infection, periods 10-14 days ago, and live infection has already been found (pictured, top left).
- Primary mildew on shoots and on flower buds (pictured, top right) is now very apparent and has been suited by the warm dry weather. You can apply Kindred up until the end of flowering. Justice is a very effective protectant product with an EAMU for apples and pears, and would be best used as extension growth starts, to protect the emerged tissue.
- If your orchard has a history of Apple Sawfly, you should be putting out white sticky traps to monitor for the pest. Emergence models suggest that adults (pictured, left) could be found now in early sites and will be emerging from diapause on later sites in the next week or so. *Rhynchites* weevils are already being found in trees, so discuss with your agronomist the best timing of your insecticide application to control both pests if necessary.
- Apple Ermine Moth is often only a nuisance but if numbers are allowed to build up in orchards, it can cause considerable damage. They are starting to be seen in leaf mines (pictured, above right) and you should be targeting an insecticide (Runner or Coragen) as they migrate from the mines into their social groups before they produce their webbing silk. Often in cider orchards this is at early flowering. Remember you must not use Coragen in flowering as it is not safe to bees.
- If you are unconvinced of the value of fruitlet thinning chemicals, then the picture (right) should help to persuade you. The row on the left was treated with Brevis in 2016. The one on the right was not and you can clearly see the better return bloom in the treated row. You should also be thinking about blossom thinning, either mechanically (best results achieved as first flowers open) or using Headland Thio-S as a blossom thinner (particularly useful late in flowering to remove bloom from one year wood).



PEARS

- With most orchards at or close to petal fall, you should be applying gibberellins (Novagib or Regulex SG) for skin finish.
- Remember that the end of flowering is the cut-off for using Scala on pears.
- We are finding good numbers of anthocorid eggs in orchards, so generally no action is needed yet for Pear Sucker control. The eggs are inserted near the mid-vein of the leaf and turn from white to reddish-brown close to emergence.

PLUMS

- With a big set in many orchards, foliar feeding as well as granular nitrogen will be very important.
- If you applied a pre-bloom insecticide for aphids, check again at petal fall as it may need a follow-up spray.

CHERRIES

- Black Cherry Aphid is now being found in many orchards and Gazelle or Calypso should be applied at petal fall.
- Calcium applications with Calmax Ultra should be started from the end of flowering. Switch from Kelpak during flowering to Megafol in the stoning phase to help stone development and reduce run-off.
- With cooler temperatures and some colder winds forecast, if you have vented tunnels, consider bringing the polythene back down to improve the environment for your pollinating bumblebees.

MISCELLANEOUS

- If you wish to attend the BIFGA Spring Walk at Mole End Farm, Chart Sutton, Maidstone ME17 3ER on 26th April, please contact secretary@bifga.org.uk or call 01892 724540 before Tuesday to book your place.

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