

It's our people that make the difference

STRAWBERRIES

- Strawberry and Potato Aphid is being found in increasing numbers.
- Crown *Botrytis* is a concern, with tunnels being kept wrapped up, but the odd sunny day causing a rise in temperature and humidity. Make sure you have good fungicide cover and that spray is getting into the crown of the plant as well as onto any flowers present.
- In second year crops, Western Flower Thrips damage to petals (pictured, top left) can be found already. Your biocontrol programmes should be under way and may need augmenting with further introductions of *Neoseiulus cucumeris*.
- Watch out for early signs of Powdery Mildew infection, e.g. pink petals on flowers (pictured, top right).
- There have been some badly frosted sites but the majority have escaped with what appears to be minor damage.
- SWD are being caught in traps and numbers are rising. Trapping now, gives you an idea of the likely problems in late summer.



RASPBERRIES

- Aphids are appearing in protected crops, but also, usefully, are some *Aphidius* parasitic wasps with the mummified aphids easy to spot (pictured, right). This is a naturally occurring parasitism and you can also introduce *Aphidius ervi*, but you need to be careful with your insecticide choice.
- Cane Midge and Leaf Curling Midge traps are beginning to catch both pests. As there was plenty of Leaf Curling Midge last season, early treatment would be sensible.
- After the cold spell starting at the end of February, there seems to be much more even bud break in protected and outdoor crops.



BLACKCURRANTS

- First Gall Mite emergence (mites pictured right emerging from a 'big bud') has, once again, more or less coincided with the first day of the year when temperatures reach 15°C for more than a few minutes. This agrees with the emergence model which has reached first mite emergence everywhere except Scotland. You should therefore have applied sulphur to most varieties, although there might be some Ben Alder and Ben Tirran left to do. Second round applications should be under way on other varieties.
- Discuss with your agronomist timing and product choice for Leaf Midge sprays soon.



BLUEBERRIES

- Pollination is very important in blueberry. Berry size is very closely correlated with the number of viable seeds in each fruit (see picture right, courtesy of Omex). Make sure you have adequate numbers of bumblebees as they are very effective pollinators and result in high seed set. Honeybees, whilst highly attracted to blueberry flowers, do not set as many seeds. Solitary bees are also very effective pollinators. Read more [here](#). You can also increase seed set by using **Kelpak** in flowering, which enhances pollen tube growth.

