

Bugs and Blights of April

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The purpose of this column is to help home fruit growers to identify, prevent, or correctly manage plant problems which includes insects, diseases, and animals and a host of environmental and weather related problems. Correct diagnosis will reduce all pesticide use because 65 – 80% of the plant problems submitted to the WSU – Puyallup Plant Clinic are not caused by insects or diseases.

Why fruit trees fail to bear: Pollination is key for good fruit production. Lack of fruit can be caused by a lack of bees or other pollinators, lack of a compatible pollinizer, frost or cold temperature which damages the pollen tube, or flowers, and diseases attacking flowers (botrytis, brown rot of cherry, plum) or age and health of trees. This year, keep records of temperatures, be mindful of the weather conditions and check for flower diseases. WSU pub EB0838

<http://cru.cahe.wsu.edu/CEPublications/eb0838/eb0838.html>

Spotted Wing Drosophila (SWD) (*Drosophila suzukii*) is a newly introduced vinegar fly (often called fruit flies) which can insert eggs into soft fruit by means of a saw-like ovipositor. It will provide challenges to all soft fruit growers. Because it is likely to be a serious agricultural pest, scientists from WA, OR, CA and BC gathered in Portland at the end of March to share information and discuss how to management strategies. Home gardeners will get some of the spinoff from their efforts. For now trapping is one way to detect and reduce the numbers of flies. Dave Pehling, WSU Snohomish County Extension has been working with a simple trap. Also there will be a meeting on SWD at the WSU - Mt. Vernon Research and Extension Center on April 30th. <http://snohomish.wsu.edu> (see right panel for details) For more info on SWD

<http://snohomish.wsu.edu/garden/documents/SWDWSU0210.PDF>



Apple Anthracnose starts first as tissue-thin bark peeling back from small branches. Large sunken cankers may be noticed in the trunk and larger branches. As the tissue dies beneath, and new expanded growth begins on the unaffected wood. The the cankers can't grow so they appear sunken. Eventually the dead area splits into stringy fibers like the strings of a fiddle. Apples can become infected causing a bull's eye rot in storage. Some cultivars are highly susceptible. Cankers are annual and don't progress but they can produce spores for 2-3 years.

<http://postharvest.tfrec.wsu.edu/pgDisplay.php?article=J4I1A> Hortsense for homeowner products and a simpler version <http://pep.wsu.edu/hortsense/> → tree fruit → Apple → Disease → Anthracnose and <http://ipmnet.org/plant-disease/disease.cfm?RecordID=36> and

<https://pubs.wsu.edu/ItemDetail.aspx?ProductID=13404&SeriesCode=&CategoryID=&Keyword=anthracnose> \$1.50 plus tax.

Tent caterpillars first show up when the apples begin to bloom. Look for the first glint of white silk of the tents, and tiny black caterpillars. There are three tent formers in spring. For photos and detail

<http://snohomish.wsu.edu/garden/documents/tentcaterpillars0410.PDF>

WSU Snohomish County Website contains information on current pests and meetings and events. Go to <http://snohomish.wsu.edu> for calendar of events and for garden resources and “hot stuff” which is where you’ll find pest alerts.

Bugs and Blights Workshops are held every 3rd Wednesday from 10:00am – 12:00noon. The format is a short (1/2 hour slide illustrated lecture), then lab samples dragged in from our yards and from customers and a field walk to see insect and diseases up close and live. <http://snohomish.wsu.edu> Check the right side panel or Calendar for details. Cost is \$20 and registration details are at our website. Be sure to reserve your place even if you can’t get the registration fee in on time.

Brown rot of stone fruits is one of our really damaging diseases. There is a two-fold whammy: damage to flowers which can impact the potential for fruit to develop and later infection of the fruit which turns into a brown, furry, wrinkled mummy. Brown rot affects not only cherries but plums, peaches and some ornamentals such as flowering almond and flowering quince. <http://plant-disease.ippc.orst.edu/disease.cfm?RecordID=272> This source includes both pesticides for commercial and home use. For home use only connect with Hortsense (<http://pep.wsu.edu/hortsense/>) → tree fruits → cherry → diseases → Brown rot blossom blight and fruit rot