

Gloomy cold weather

(Continued from Page 16)
area gets dry weather in the upcoming days after the rainy weather pattern has passed, the fruit situation should be fine.

"I'm more concerned with the frost damage," Blevins reported. Although he, like most fruit growers, states that he won't know how much damage was incurred in his orchard, he approximates that he may have lost one-fourth of his crop.

"I'll know more in a couple of weeks," the grower reported, adding that "They're hurt, I know that."

For the most part, the lower areas were affected the most at Blevins Fruit Farm.

Carlton Groff, of Groff's Orchards, Street Road, Kirkwood, in southern Lancaster County, noted that he is finding damage where he didn't expect to and not finding damage where he thought he would.

"I see more strawberries frozen than I expected," he told Lancaster Farming, but the tart cherries and peaches weren't hurt as much as he had envisioned.

"I would have thought that with the cold weather last week the cherry pollination might not be good," he commented, "but even though it's really too early to tell for sure, it looks fine to me." Groff does say that he has more than an ample amount of bees to take care of his orchard.

In sizing up the damage done to his crop, Groff points out that he "wouldn't rate the losses as economic."

"We always fret and frown at this time of the year and then we end up better than we expected," he notes. And, even though other fruit growers expressed concern for the rainy weekend ahead, Groff looked at it optimistically.

"The way it's been dry lately, I think the rain will do me more good than harm," he believes.

As for the future, Groff says there is little left to do but go about business and pray.

"I think I have a good site," he commented, speaking of the hilly area in southern Lancaster County, "and you just have to know where it will frost and where it won't. That's the key to the orchard business."

Still another fruit grower in Lancaster County is unconcerned for the weekend ahead due to advance preparation.

Fred Funk, who operates Funks Farm Market, in Millersville, finally has his irrigation system all set up after scurrying to make up for manufacturer delays. Last weekend had been a frustrating few days for Funk who tried to beat the Sunday frost warnings to irrigate his 12 acres of strawberries. He reported that he and three to five other workers had spent four

days laying six miles of pipe and some 300 sprinkler heads through his strawberries. Parts for the pipe didn't arrive until Friday after which Funk and workers hurriedly tried to beat Sunday's frost.

"We did irrigate about six acres or so, but we lost a few of those around the outside edges," he reports. Funks also lost six rows of early varieties which they didn't get irrigated. This came to about 1/2 of an acre.

The frost warnings are of more concern to Funks than to most growers since they have more early varieties than the average fruit grower. They work in cooperation with USDA to get these early varieties, the plants of which they are allowed to propagate but not resell.

On the whole, Funk estimates that they saved 80 per cent of their early blossoms that they irrigated and lost five to 10 per cent of the mid-season to late varieties.

Fred Funk doesn't envision any problems for the weekend, however, now that they are set up with their irrigation.

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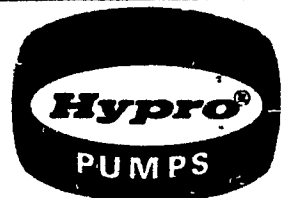
Test Freeze

If you have doubts as to how well a fruit or vegetable will freeze, test it before freezing large quantities. Freeze three or four packages and sample the food after freezing. Almost any type of cooked meat, stew, ragout or goulash—beef, lamb, pork or veal—can be frozen. Most vegetables used in these combination foods, such as peas, carrots, celery or onions, also freeze well. Cooked dry beans freeze especially well

Chocolate Tops

Chocolate candy is still the American favorite. Approximately 70 per cent of the candy produced in this country contained cocoa or chocolate. Of the total, over a fifth was solid chocolate or chocolate mixed with fruits or nuts.

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