

Apple Support Structure, Pruning Techniques

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tions, Travis said, are necessary for the development of fireblight: open flowers, wetness from rain or heavy dew, and temperatures 62 degrees or above. Those three conditions can spell onset of fireblight. Trees with blooms, especially after damaging hail, need to be treated within 24 hours with streptomycin.

Some of the apple trees as well as the peach trees were "frozen pretty hard," said David Hess, orchard manager, from the cold weather early in April this year.

Rob Crassweller, professor of horticulture at Penn State, provided pointers on tree limb spreading and correct pruning techniques to achieve maximum fruit production. It is important, Crassweller noted, for growers to "spend some time when the tree's young" in using limb spreaders and "any-

thing you can do to slow the top down a little bit."

Crassweller also reviewed the effectiveness of a variety of commercial fruit thinning chemicals available for the grower.

Carl Felland, entomologist with Penn State's Fruit Research and Extension Center in Biglerville, told growers to treat trees for European red mites at petal fall.

Felland provided information on the efficiency of insecticides on a variety of tree fruit pests for apples and peaches. Data were obtained from the "Tree Fruit Production Guide."

Felland also looked at apple trees for evidence of mites, and found 10 mites for 10 plants, on average, he inspected Thursday at Hampshire Orchards. This is not over the threshold — but needs to be watched closely as the season

progresses.

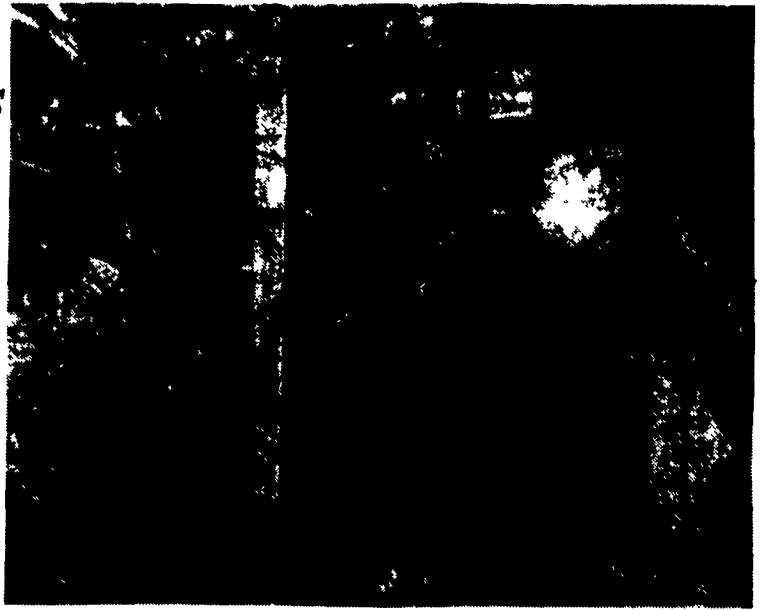
For peach growers, the green peach aphid could pose a problem, especially on nectarines, which could result in cracked and unmarketable fruit if not kept in check with a spraying program. Unfortunately, there is no "excellent" material for use against the aphid, Felland noted.

"We would like to see a better material for this insect," said Felland.

The flower thrips that were out in force to damage strawberries a couple of years ago are not in evidence this year. It could be a normal year for most strawberry fields.

Earlier on, David Hess provided a review of a homemade rope peach thinner as well as some modifications to pruning equipment.

Also, the sprayer at Hampshire Orchards was recently converted to an all-electrical system.



In the orchard, Jim Travis looked into bark diseases that could destroy trees. In one location, with apples on M26 rootstock, the tree swayed easily. Travis dug down to the trunk collar to examine evidence that would cause the loosely swaying tree. One of three factors could be present, including fireblight (M26 rootstock is highly susceptible), collar rot (caused by a fungus in wet soil that literally travel through the water), or mouse damage (which can attack the girdles down into the roots of the tree). Growers need to dig down along the side of the trunk to look for evidence of one of those three if they suspect damage.



Carl Felland, entomologist, left and Mike Hampshire.



The newer apple tree support structure uses seven-foot high aluminum conduit poles measuring a half-inch thick. The poles are supported overhead by a high tensile fence wire linked to telephone poles.

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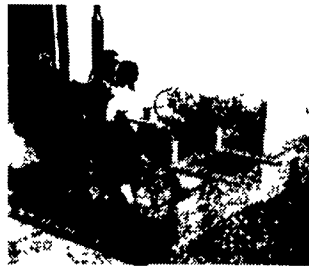
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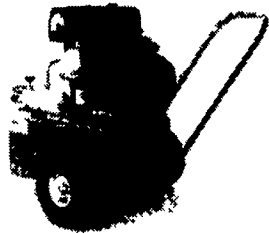


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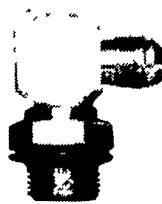
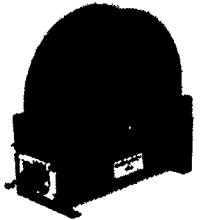
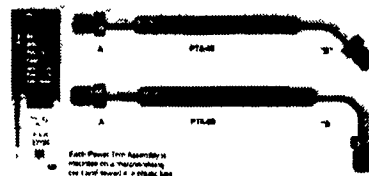
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