

Apple Festival Blooms Without Blossoms

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Adams Co. Correspondent
ARENDSVILLE (Adams Co.) — Adams County's apple blossoms couldn't wait this year for the festival held in their honor. El Nino prodded them into bloom several weeks ago.

So when the festival was held May 2-3 at the South Mountain Fairgrounds near Arendtsville the blossoms were well done blooming.

Said Larry Hull, scientist-in-charge at Penn State's Fruit Research and Extension Center in Biglerville, "They are way ahead of schedule thanks to El Nino. This is one of the earliest seasons anybody can remember. We're two to three weeks ahead of normal."

Apple growers are trying to thin the apple crop, but are not sure when to do it this year because it is "unusually early and they could over thin," Hull said.

While it's too early to tell what kind of a crop will ultimately be harvested, Hull said he doesn't believe it will be as big as last year's.

"We had the drought and a heavy crop in 1997, & he said.

The rain of the past few weeks is also creating a potential problem. "The warm and rainy weather is great for disease development," Hull said.

"If you are a plant pathologist you love it, if you are an entomologist you don't," he added.

The 43rd annual Apple Blossom Festival was also affected by the rainy weather. Showers hit the area during the two-day event. Attendance was estimated between 10,000 and 12,000 people.

Sponsored by the Adams County Fruit Growers Association, the fairgrounds were filled with craft dealers and food vendors as well as activities such as a petting zoo and face painting for children.

Shannon Shelleman, daughter of Frances Lawver and a student at Gettysburg High School, was chosen 1998 Adams County Apple Queen.

First runner-up was Becky Benner, daughter of James and Beverly Benner, a student at Fairfield High School, and second runner-up was Sara Heller, daughter of Harold and Linda Heller, a student at Biglerville High School.



Posing outside the auditorium before ceremonies to crown the 1998 Apple Queen at the Adams County Apple Blossom Festival are contestants, from left, Alexis Hartung, Shannon Shelleman, who was later chosen queen, Jessica Blake, Tiffany Myers, and Becky Benner, first runner-up. Absent when the photograph was taken was second place runner-up Sara Heller who at the time was performing with the Biglerville High School Jazz Band in concert prior to the crowning ceremony. Posing with the contestants are Amy Baugher, flower girl, and Ryan Callahan, crown bearer.

Pheromones Help Growers 'Make A Date' With Honey Bees

WOOSTER, Ohio — Do you need more honey bees in your blossoms? New chemicals may be just the "pick-up line" you need to get honey bees interested in your orchard.

Ohio State University scientists Jim Tew and Dave Ferree have been experimenting with synthetic pheromone attractants and how they can increase the pollination from flowers to fruit trees.

Honey bees are the most common source for pollinating everything from flowers to fruit trees. Growers are now seeing the number of honey bees in their fields and orchards decrease. Varroa and tracheal

mite infestations have wiped out much of the wild honey bee population. The decline has been so brutal that wild honey bees have become ineffective pollination forces.

Flowers and blossoms are billboards to the insect world. They're banners used by the plant to attract potential pollinators. All plants have them, though they differ in appearance.

Tew, associate professor in

the Honey Bee Lab at Wooster, said, "No one puts corn tassels in a vase. Why? Because they're not as flashy as a rose or carnation — and they don't need to be. Corn is a wind pollinator — it doesn't require honey bees or other insects for pollination. Apple trees, however, are another story."

In the early 1980s, there was interest in using attractants to lure honey bees to target crops. "Today, because of smaller num-

bers of honey bees, we're evaluating the effects of honey bee attractants in apple orchards," Tew said. "The attractants bring the bees to the blossoms."

Honey bees use chemical cues for survival. "Bee hives are pitch black, extremely crowded and remain between 95 and 98 degrees Fahrenheit. It's a dark, hot, close world we can't even imagine," Tew said. "In that world, chemical cues are extremely important — foods,

workers, queen, drones and larvae all possess their own chemical identification markers."

Tew said having a market that extends from the colony to the foraging world, where they gather nectar, isn't surprising. And that is the tool used to make the chemical configuration for a synthetic honey bee pheromone.

Commercial companies have tried to duplicate the major com-

(Turn to Page B19)

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