

Twilight Meeting

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the limb on a much better angle," he said.

"It takes a little wood out to allow the branch to bend." Bracing the branch will keep it at the new position. June, said Rogers, is the optimal time to do the procedure, since Balsa canker thrives only in cooler weather.

"The lower you start the scaffold branches, the more canopy you have," said Crasswell.

The number of branches is also important, according to Rogers, who pointed out that many of the orchard's peach trees had four "leaders" on each tree.

"That's the maximum," he said. "Three would be better."

Plum Pox Update

Tree health topics included the high-profile plum pox virus. The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture is again in charge of sampling both orchards already sampled and those not yet sampled for the virus.

"The plum pox virus was not found outside of the quarantine area. We've been really fortunate in this state. If it continues, we will have this virus contained," he said.

On the plum pox front, "no news is good news," he said. So far, 900 acres have been pulled, according to Travis, with more slated to be destroyed.

There is a moratorium on planting in the quarantine area, even for homeowners, but "if I was outside the quarantine block and I wanted peaches, I'd go ahead and plant them," he said, pointing out that Pennsylvania nurseries remain negative

for the virus.

Other tree health topics, according to presenters, include the threat of the tomato ringspot virus. The virus lives on broadleaf weeds, which are fed on by nematodes, or worms.

The worm then picks up the virus, feeds on the peach tree root, and injects the virus into the root, causing the tree to die in three to four years.

The fire blight threat, said Travis, drops off after the orchard is finished with blooming. However with lingering blooming may come the chance for an infection. Bacteria is aided by temperatures greater than 70 degrees.

"Only three hours of wet-

ness will wash the infection down into the bloom," said Travis. Also leaves tattered in violent summer storms may allow trees to become infected.

"Don't relax too much," he said. "Be alert. Keep your eye on the weather forecast and the growth of the plants."

Chemical Thinning Response Studies

Crasswell also gave a report on studies centering on chemical thinning. Reducing clusters of young fruit by spraying products such as Sevin or other chemicals saves on manual labor, making the technique commonplace in orchards.

Using a combination of several products yields the best results, according to

Crasswell. Thinning the crops increases the size of the remaining fruit, promotes flowering the next year, and prevents biennial bearing.

The weather during the spring season, when the trees are thinned, has an effect on the tree's response to thinners. Also with the type of bloom, amount of bee activity, and grower management factors — such as the individual techniques of applying the thinner — all help determine a tree's response to thinners.

Heavy or short bloom, poor bee activity and excessive, cool, or wet weather all lead to increased response to thinners, according to Crasswell.

Always spray trees after flowering, he said, since the chemicals are toxic to bees. A homeowner, however, should bypass chemical thinning for hand-thinning the trees.

Greg Krawczyk, Penn State fruit entomologist, gave a insect pest update. He gave not only information about insects but also the type and time of spraying for the pests.

He recommended considering the choice and rate of an insecticide product, along with the method of application, water volume, and treating on an area-wide basis. Rotate insecticide chemistries between broods whenever possible, advised Krawczyk.

2001 Mid-Atlantic Convention Biggest And Best

HERSHEY (Dauphin Co.) — More than 1,600 growers, industry suppliers, processors, extension agents, university staff, and speakers and other guests registered for the 2001 Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention in addition to 200 exhibitor representatives. That put the total attendance near the 2,000 mark.

The 2001 Convention enjoyed good weather, unlike last year when an unexpected snowstorm dumped eight or more inches of drifting snow over much of the eastern part of Pennsylvania on the first day. Moreover, the 2001 Convention planners had scheduled seven concurrent sessions on all three days of the meetings, making the program the most extensive yet.

New sessions on wine grapes, potatoes, and marketing were added to the

usual schedule of education sessions.

Dr. Peter Ferretti from Penn State was the general vegetable program chair and Dr. Robert Crasswell, also from Penn State, coordinated the tree fruit program. Kathleen Demchak from Penn State planned the small fruit program and Mark Chen from the Lancaster County Cooperative Extension put together the wine grape program.

Kenneth Martin from Furman Foods coordinated the tomato sessions and Dr. William Lamont from Penn State University organized the three half-day sessions on potatoes.

The bedding plant and cut flower sessions were handled by Dr. Robert Berghage at Penn State University. John Berry from the Lehigh County Cooperative Extension set up the roadside mar-

keting session.

The Department of Agriculture, the Pennsylvania Food Merchants Association, along with PVGA and the Vegetable Marketing and Research Program, sponsored a grower reception prior the annual Fruit and Vegetable Growers Dinner January 30. The evening's program featured awards and presentations by the participating groups after entertainment by the Biglerville High School Jazz Band.

The 2001 Mid-Atlantic Convention was the 24th year that the State Horticultural Association of Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Association, the

New Jersey State Horticultural Society, and the Maryland State Horticultural Society have met together in Hershey. This year the four organizations were joined by peach growers from around the country for the annual meeting of the National Peach Council. More than 120 exhibitors lined the aisles of the trade show in the Great American Hall at the Hershey Convention Center.

Growers who missed this year's convention can still order copies of the 2001 Proceedings for the vegetable portion of the program. Simply send a check for \$12 to PVGA at RR 1, Box 947, Richfield, PA 17086.



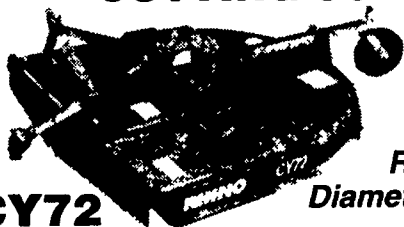
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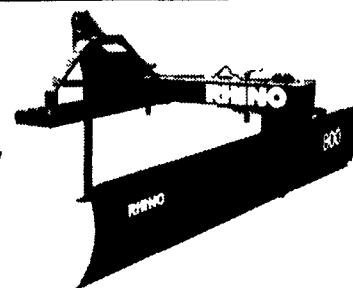


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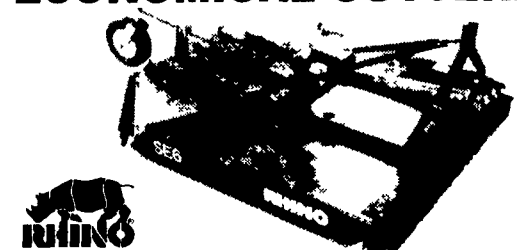
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