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British Columbia Coastal Fruit Tree Newsletter

Richard Hallman - Fruit Tree Magic

April 23, 2020

Hi everyone, welcome to the first edition of this e-newsletter. At this time of major changes to society and life as we know it, I'm sending my best wishes to all of you and your loved ones to stay safe.

Edition Topics

Growing

- Bloom 2020
- Cross pollination

Protecting

- Leafrollers
- Pearleaf Blister Mite
- Zinc Deficiency

Interesting

- Bud Stages

Feed Back Requested

Growing Trees and Fruit



Bloom Time 2020

We are in the middle of the most dramatic and rapidly changing time of year for fruit trees – bloom time. Across Coastal British Columbia blooming of apricots, peaches, Asian plums, and cherries is almost complete; European plums and Asian pears are in full bloom and European pears and apples are just starting. In some areas early apples and Bartlett pears are in full bloom. Timing varies from location to location and orchard to orchard.

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Cross Pollination

Cross pollination is critical for many fruit trees, particularly apples, pears, most plums, some apricots, and older cherry varieties. Each of these types of fruit can only cross pollinate with other varieties of the same type of fruit. Even inside individual types of fruit there are some varieties that are either incompatible or have sterile pollen, so it is important to know the varieties that you are growing. The cross-pollinating trees must both be blooming at the same time. If in past years your trees bloomed but produced few if any fruit, you need to do a variety and timing cross pollination evaluation of your trees.

[Read more](#)

Protecting Trees and Fruit



What's eating your trees?

Sometimes leafroller larvae tunnel into bud clusters or roll and stick leaves together. Look for feeding injury to buds and small leaves. You may need to pull the buds apart or unroll leaves to find the culprits. If you can find the larvae when they are small, they are easy to control with organic sprays or by crushing them (this can be very satisfying!). If you don't catch them in the act you will wonder what caused all the damage a month or two later.

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Pearleaf Blister Mite is showing up

I found leaves showing red blisters caused by Pearleaf Blister Mite on an Asian Pear tree in the Fort Langley area a few days ago. This mite attacks pears and some varieties of apples in BC (Gala, Newtown, Rome Beauty, sometimes McIntosh and Spartan) as well as several ornamental trees and shrubs. The Blister Mite is common across the coastal area of BC and in most pear growing areas around the world. It is easy to control with the right timing, however, it is too late for this year.

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Zinc Deficiency

Zinc is one of the most important nutrients for fruit trees. It is critical for the formation and function of chlorophyll, several enzymes, and the growth hormone auxin. Auxin is key to apical dominance - the phenomena that we are controlling when we prune and train trees.

Zinc deficiency symptoms are most obvious in the Spring on shoots that grew last year. The deficiency appears as small, narrow leaves (little leaf), blind wood in the middle portion of vertical shoots (little or no bud growth) and a group of normal leaves that look like a palm tree at the top. If the deficiency is severe branches will die. In most cases trees grow out of these symptoms as weather warms up, so take note and plan to apply zinc this fall or winter.

Zinc deficiency is most often seen in apples, cherries, and pears.

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New and Interesting



Bud Stages

The development of fruit trees, insects, diseases and other organisms depends on how warm the spring has been (growing degree days). Bud stages are an indicator of growing degree days and can be used to predict when various pests and diseases are likely to appear and to evaluate cross pollination.

[Read about Bud Stages](#)

Feedback Requested

Topics initially included in this newsletter are those on fruit trees near where I live in Langley BC, so your timing may be different. For this newsletter to be relevant to you and other fruit tree gardeners and orchardists across this area, I welcome your feedback regarding:

- What fruit tree problems are you encountering now
- What you are puzzled about
- What you want to learn about

Feedback on format and readability would also be helpful.

Please forward this email to fruit tree growers who may be interested.

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