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British Columbia Coastal Fruit Tree Newsletter

Richard Hallman - Fruit Tree Magic

May 10, 2020

This edition is focused on the frustrating and often confusing problem of the worms that infest our fruit. Apple Maggots and Codling moths are the primary culprits. Codling Moth is the first to emerge each spring, so it is the current topic. Apple Maggots emerge about a month later so will be dealt with later.

Stay safe

Richard Hallman

Edition Topics

Protecting

- **The Worms in your Apples and Pears**
- **Preventing Worms getting into your Apples and Pears**
- **How to Predict Codling Moth Emergence in your Garden or Orchard**
- **Pest and Disease Monitoring**

Growing Trees and Fruit

- **It's Branch Bending Time**

Interesting

- **Codling Moths and Organic Farming**



**A Heart Shaped
Apple Tree For
These Times**

Protecting Trees and Fruit



The Worms in your Apples and Pears

May is the month to plan for and take action to prevent wormy apples and pears at harvest time. Codling Moths and Apple Maggots are the most common high protein critters in your fruit.

Codling Moths usually start emerging from their overwintering stage in mid-May to early-June in South Coastal British Columbia to mate and start laying eggs on your fruit. They continue emerging until late June (mid-July in cooler areas)

depending on the temperature. With the recent heat moths will be emerging soon. See the post “How to Predict Codling Moth Emergence” for more information.

[Read More](#)

Codling Moth Life Cycle

If viewing on a phone, turn it sideways to easily move through the life cycle.

This Codling Moth Life Cycle is from the Sterile Insect Release Program in the Okanagan Valley. There are only two generations in Coastal British Columbia in most years.



Preventing Worms getting into your Apples and Pears

Organic prevention is simple with one or a few small apple or pear trees, but it requires preparation and a bit of work. The most common and successful prevention method is to place a barrier around the fruit so Codling Moths and Apple Maggots cannot get to the fruit.

These barriers are a layer of mesh that the insects cannot get through. They are placed over fruit, whole branches, or whole trees. They need to remain in place from late May or Early June till harvest in the fall. This may not be the look you were

hoping for when you planted your apple tree(s), but organic bug free fruit may be worth it. If you come up with a way to make these barriers look desirable for front yards, please send me a picture.

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How to Predict Codling Moth Emergence in your Garden or Orchard

For keen fruit tree gardeners, home orchardists and commercial orchards, accurately predicting Codling Moth emergence and when they start laying eggs is important. Due to recent warm weather in the BC Interior, Codling Moths are emerging and are about to start laying eggs. They should start emerging in Coastal BC in a couple of weeks dependent on how warm it gets. Once they emerge, mating and then egg laying occurs when twilight temperatures are above 15°C. If you plan to protect your fruit with fruit sox or other barriers, they need to be in place **before** egg laying starts.

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Pest and Disease Monitoring

Pests and diseases are showing up in abundance. In the last week, the following were seen on fruit trees in Coastal BC:

- Aphids, Peach Leaf Curl, Leafrollers, SilverLeaf, Powdery Mildew, Fire Blight, Bacterial Canker, Brown Rot (Blossom Blight), Coryneum Blight, Apple Leaf Curling Midge, and Pearleaf Blister Mites.

If you see a problem the following resources should help you determine what it is. If you get stuck, email me an image and I will try to help. I am developing simpler tools to help you monitor for common BC Coastal fruit trees problems.

Garden and Home Orchard BC

Pest and Disease Resources

Commercial Orchard BC Pest and Disease Resources

Growing Trees and Fruit



It's Branch Bending Time

Bend your branches for more fruit! Branches growing more horizontally reduces apical dominance and produces larger future harvests. If the branches on your tree are very upright, more than 60° from horizontal, they can be bent down to a more productive angle.

Branches are most flexible during warm weather when they are growing quickly as they are now. Younger branches are much more flexible than older branches, bend them when they are one or two years old. Older branches do not bend easily, you may break some. A broken branch is better than an upright branch!

When bending branches avoid stressing the junctions of branches with larger branches or the tree trunk. Right angle junctions are much stronger than sharp angled junctions. Caution: The wood of European plums and many pears is brittle when compared to apples, bend them with caution!

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Interesting



Codling Moths and Organic Farming

This post is based on a great article in the 2017 Winter Edition of the British Columbia Organic article titled "40 Years of Thinking Like an Insect". This is not new information, but it is a great story about the primary pest of apples and pears in BC over the last 100+ years.

This article discusses Gary Judd's work with the Sterile Insect Release (SIR) Program, Sterile Insect Technology (SIT) and Mating Disruption at the Agriculture Canada Research Station in Summerland BC. This work completely changed the way Codling Moths were and are controlled in commercial orchards in the Okanagan, Similkameen and Creston Valleys in British Columbia, and recently Washington State.

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