

2015 INSECT, DISEASE, AND IPM REPORT

Location: Western New York

Persons Reporting: Art Agnello, Dave Kain

Pest Type: Insects and Mites

It was difficult to get a good handle on the insect situation this season, mainly because it seemed relatively quiet with regard to many of the key pest species, but we never felt comfortable advising complacency while there was still time for something to rear up and cause late-breaking problems, which something did, eventually. The first part of the spring started out with nearly ideal tree (and insect) development weather — not much rain, moderate temperatures, and with a gradual warming trend that would make any New York native think they'd been teleported a few states to the south. That is, of course, until the last week of May, when some polar express cold blasts barreled their way through the landscape, followed by a sequence of storm fronts that made June one of the wettest on record (at least in WNY, while the Hudson Valley perversely suffered from too little precipitation). This had the effect of suppressing many of insect flights and typical infestation patterns, although frequent rain events made it a challenge to keep the trees covered with preventive sprays. Things remained fairly unsettled into July, and we never really got into true summer temperature patterns until mid-August, with warm and dry weather continuing throughout most of September.

On balance, insect pests were not too problematic, although a number of them needed some extra attention, as is common. As happened in 2014, the rainy spells helped to keep down **mite** numbers for much of the state, although some blocks in the Hudson Valley did run into population blow-ups. Unlike year, **San Jose scale** infestations did not seem to be such a common concern, although **woolly apple aphid**, which is notable for being a dependable late summer complication, was present in a number of sites and posed some year-end difficulties. **Codling moth** and **oriental fruit moth** continued to be important drivers of many insect management programs, particularly in western NY, but didn't really gain strength until the later varieties were being harvested in October. A troubling number of WNY orchards were suddenly discovered with some substantial late codling moth infestations, even despite what otherwise would have been considered decent spray programs -- this may herald the start of a decline in some of the not-quite-top tier worm materials, such as Assail and Belt. **Apple maggot** trap numbers this season were mysteriously low, and few infested apples were reported. **Brown marmorated stink bug** was once again extremely rare in WNY, and low numbers were similarly reported throughout the mid-Atlantic, although there were trackable populations in parts of ENY and the Hudson Valley. **Spotted wing drosophila** showed up somewhat earlier this year, and continued as a more universal, and urgent, concern, still mostly for berry growers; our cherry and peach plantings will start to require more diligent oversight if this trend continues. The troublesome **black stem borer**, an ambrosia beetle that has been found as the cause of tree decline and death in numerous plantings in WNY, was also documented in several ENY counties this season. We've been assessing a few options as preventive trunk spray treatments, but still don't have much confidence in our ability to control them adequately.