Issue 2 – May 21, 2025

Fruit Crop Report

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Provincial Overview

Majority of apple, sour cherry, and saskatoon orchards are in full or late bloom. Recent frost in some regions and rain events may have an impact on saskatoon and other tree fruit crops in bloom. Raspberry canes have good regrowth on second year canes (floricanes). The bulk of the 600,000-700,000 bare-root strawberries will be transplanted early-mid May. The remaining straw mulch on established strawberry fields has been removed. Early indications are that strawberry plants survived the winter with minimal winter injury.

Commercial Fruit Crops- Timely Topics

Saskatoons

Protecting Your Saskatoon Yields from Leaf and Berry Spot Disease

Figure 2: White tip stage in Saskatoons.

Application of a recommended fungicide to ensure the flowers are protected from disease causing fungi is often necessary in Manitoba. The primary disease of saskatoon plants in the spring is *Entomosporium* Leaf and Berry Spot disease. **If *Entomosporium* inoculums are present in an orchard at full bloom, then ideally a fungicide application should be made within 4 days of a rain event. With the recent rain events during bloom, conditions are favourable for disease development. A second fungicide application should be applied, if at least 7 days have elapsed since the first application, especially if rain has fallen during that time period.**

Plants that are left unprotected during a rainfall are at great risk of severe crop losses. If a disease outbreak caused crop losses the previous year in your orchards, the favourable conditions this year may result in more disease if no attempts at management are made. Once the flowers and fruit are infected, those fruit are unmarketable.

Timing for fungicide applications is often based on an estimate of when a certain proportion of the flower buds are fully open. For purposes of pest management, the term "full bloom" refers to the point at which the majority of flowers in the orchard are fully open; by this time some will be past full bloom, while others will be at earlier stages. For disease control recommendations see **2025 Fungicides for use on Saskatoons to control Entomosporium leaf and berry spot disease** .

Report compiled by Anthony Mintenko
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Saskatoon Frost Tolerance

With the recent frost events this past weekend in some regions, flowers and newly set fruit of saskatoons may have been at risk of damage. Most Saskatoon orchards were mid to late bloom or newly set fruit stage. Saskatoon flowers and newly set fruit are susceptible to damage with frosts at -2.2ºC or lower. Below this temperature actively growing plant tissues (e.g. flower buds) are killed or damaged. This damage may be visible within one hour to a couple days after the frost. Symptoms of frost damage are not always visible, but look for slight browning of internal flower tissue and slight browning of flower petals.

Figure 1: Frost damage on saskatoon flower buds.

The amount of damage to the flower tissue depends on many factors such as length of frost event, lowest temperature achieved, soil temperature/ moisture levels (heat release from the soil by conductivity) and precipitation (snow/ rain) occurring during frost event (may help protect plants). Keep in mind that temperatures can be two to three degrees cooler than temperatures reported by weather stations, which are taken at shoulder level. Therefore, thermometers should be located in low spots where frost would usually occur first.

Strawberries

Control of Anthracnose in Strawberries

This disease has not been as common in Manitoba compared to other strawberry producing regions like southern Ontario, Nova Scotia and many USA regions. It can affect flower buds, stems and berries. Typically more of an issue in day-neutral strawberries and some susceptible June-bearing cultivars (i.e. Kent, Annapolis, Mira, Cavendish).

Symptoms

This disease can affect flower buds, stems and berries. Symptoms on berries and stems are the appearance of sunken dark lesions, while on flower buds they dry-up and turn brown (figure 2). A slimy pink spore mass may form on the berry lesion. If the berry forms a fuzzy white/grey spore mass then the disease is grey mold/ botrytis not anthracnose.

Figure 2: Anthracnose on strawberry fruit buds.

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Chemical Controls

Anthracnose in Ontario and other strawberry producing regions has been found to be resistant to all group 11 fungicides. **Avoid using group 11 fungicides Cabrio, Evito, Pristine, Merivon, Quadris and Luna to control anthracnose.** For control strategies see Strategies for Prevention & Control of Anthracnose in Strawberries (source Fruit Crop Report Dec. 2024).

Control of Grey Mold (Botrytis) in Strawberries

Figure 3: Grey mold on strawberries.

Grey mold (sci. name *Botrytis*) can be quite common in strawberry fields with favourable wet weather conditions before and during bloom. With wet spring and early summer of 2024 many strawberry fields experienced levels of fruit rot. These fields likely have higher levels of overwintering grey mold spores increasing the chance of grey mold again in 2025. Customers usually complain of off-flavored fruit if berries infected with grey mold are eaten. This disease affects blossoms and blossom stalks of green or ripe fruit. Infection usually starts in the blossom and may destroy the entire blossom stalk. The blossom infection can enter a dormant period in the calyx or hull, then become reactivated to cause fruit rot.

Symptoms & Environmental Conditions for Infection

The rot is soft and light brown in colour. The fungus may spread to other blossoms and berries through direct contact, or by spores that are blown or splashed. A fine grey powdery growth develops and infects blossoms, fruit stalks, fruit and other plant parts (see figure 3). Fruit rot and grey mold may appear on the picked fruit after one or two days.

Grey mold is favoured by shade or dense foliage in the bed and extended periods of excessive moisture. The likelihood of infection is increased by cool spring and summer temperatures, high humidity and natural rainfall. Fruit rot can also be favoured by factors that produce soft fruit, such as high application of nitrogen during fruiting.

Control

Typically need to control *botrytis* the year after since the spores overwinter on plant residue. **Critical timing is to control at bloom.** Continue on a 7 to 14 day schedule. Use the higher rate and/or shorter intervals when disease pressure is high (i.e. moist field conditions). General ratings of effectiveness of fungicides on botrytis from OMFRA efficacy ratings are, Very Effective: Pristine, Luna, Fontelis, Miravis Prime, Switch, Button, Scala, Impala, Elevate; Effective: Supra Captan, Captan. Refer to **2025 Strawberry Botrytis Grey Mold Management Chart** for further control options.

Manitoba Fruit Crop Statistics for 2024 Season

Strawberry

Strawberry yields were above average for most producers. Harvesting of mid-season June-bearing cultivars started in early July until mid-late July. Many producers had good first, second and third berry pickings. Wet conditions during flowering resulted in higher fruit rot issues. Average prices for strawberries U-pick vs pre-pick, $4.18-$5.46/lb ($18-19 u-pick, $26-27 pre-pick 4 L basket) (see table 1).

Saskatoon

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Yields were average for most orchards with harvesting starting mid-July. Wet conditions in the spring and early summer resulted in higher levels of *Entomosporium* leaf and berry spot disease. Average prices for Saskatoons U-pick vs pre-pick $5.29-$7.35/lb ($20 u-pick, $29-30 pre-pick 4 L basket).

Raspberry

Raspberry yields were below average for most producers as the primary insect pest, spotted wing drosophila (SWD), had high population levels at the start of harvest. Fields without SWD control had 60-80% yield loss. Average prices for raspberries U-pick vs pre-pick, $5.54-$7.13/ lb ($22 u-pick, $28-29 pre-pick 4 L basket).

Tree Fruit

Apple orchards experienced lower than average yields, likely as a result of stress from drought conditions and leaf hopper pest damage the previous season. Dwarf sour cherries had below average yields due to intense SWD infestations and wet field conditions hindering SWD control applications. Haskap had average yields with a cool and wet spring.

TABLE 1: Area, Marketings and Value of Fruit, 2024

	No. of Census Farms 2016	Total Area Harvested and Non-Harvested (acres)	Area Harvested (acres)	Marketings (000 lbs)	Average Price ($/lb.)	Total Value ($000)
Apples	35	45	40	100	0.90	90
Raspberries	74	141	136	136	6.33	861
Saskatoons	76	250	243	656	6.32	4,146
Strawberries	63	500	250	1,500	5.07	7,605
Other fruit	72	96	86	206	6.92	1,428
TOTAL	**320**	**1,032**	**755**	**2,598**	**5.11**	**14,130**
SOURCES: Statistics Canada, Census of Agriculture 2016, Manitoba Agriculture 2024.						

High Tunnel Strawberry Trial Update

No update on high tunnel strawberry activities at this time.

For detailed information on building this high tunnel see High Tunnel Design and Set up or watch the video at High Tunnels Their Design and Construction. For details via video High Tunnel Preparation, Operation & Crop Production.

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