Issue 4 – June 10, 2026

Fruit Crop Report

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Provincial Overview

Majority of strawberry fields are in full bloom, depending on the cultivars planted (early, mid, late season cultivars). At least one control spray for tarnish plant bug (*Lygus* spp.) has been applied in most fields. With the recent extreme temperatures, new strawberry fields have required additional irrigation to cool plant crown and roots (strawberry-heat-stress.pdf). Saskatoons, sour cherry and chokecherry are in petal fall to green fruit stage. Dry weather, in most saskatoon orchards during most of the bloom period, likely reduced the potential disease pressure from Entomosporium leaf and berry spot disease. Early and late season apple cultivars are in full bloom to petal drop stage. Good flower set in many apple orchards.

Commercial Fruit Crops - Timely Topics

Saskatoons - Opportunity to Contribute

"S'2n: Innovative Saskatoon berry breeding using Manitoba's cross-compatible diploid accessions" a collaboration between Prairie Fruit Growers Association and the University of Saskatchewan's (UofS) fruit program (led by Dr. Anze Svara - Fruit Genetics and Breeding), received Sustainable CAP funding. This research will focus on breeding new saskatoon berry cultivars by identifying new diverse saskatoon berry plants, testing them for production and integrating them into the breeding program. This work could set foundations for long-term streamlined breeding of saskatoons and contribute to a new boost for growers and the industry.

To maximize the impacts of the project, we need your help! Select your favourite wild Saskatoon patch, that produces lots of berries, and send seeds that you think are worthwhile to include in the study. Below are the instruction for material collection and shipping:

Seeds from Berries

- Collect when berries are ripe in July
- Extract seeds from the berry and pack in a paper envelope
- Include the following information on a paper in the envelope:
  - Plant location
  - Bush or plant growth habits
  - Berry or fruit size (mm wide)
  - Flavour description
  - Any unique or noteworthy traits
- Mail to Dr. Anže Švara (anze.svara@usask.ca) at U of S, Fruit Program, Plant Science Department, 51 Campus Drive, Saskatoon, SK, S7N 5A8

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Strawberries

Pollinators and Visitors: Focus on Bees

Figure 1: Bumble bee on strawberry flower.

Strawberry flowers are visited by many insects and pollinators in Manitoba, including native (figure 1) and managed bees. Bees rely on flowers for nectar and pollen and are commonly seen on many flowers. Flies are also important visitors of strawberry flowers. When a bee visits a flower, pollen can get on its body; the transfer of that pollen to a different plant of the same species is called “cross pollination”. The abundance of native bees can vary considerably from one area to the next, and from one year to the next. This happens for several reasons that have to do with weather, predation, parasitism, disease and others factors. These factors can affect the levels of pollination.

Most cultivated varieties of strawberry has both female and male parts on each flower. Bees, as well as other insects, transfer the sticky pollen from the anther (male) to the stigma (female). Stigmas are often receptive before pollen of the same flower is available, which encourages cross pollination. More information on different pollinators of strawberry flowers at: MB AG strawberry-pollinators.pdf

Tarnish Plant Bug (TPB) Scouting and Control Preventing Strawberry Seedy-End

Symptoms & Damage

Feeding by the tarnish plant bug has two effects. Feeding on flower blossoms and developing fruit causes apical seediness in strawberries (figure 4) and crumbly berry in raspberries. Feeding also reduces plant vigour by removing plant nutrients. Most damage occurs after petal fall. Control is typically at bloom. Damage caused by cool weather during berry formation, poor pollination and some nutrient deficiencies are commonly mistaken for feeding damage by tarnish plant bug.

Monitoring

Early monitoring of fields is important to minimize damage. It is easily done using a standard insect sweep net, and being sure to sample throughout the field on a regular basis, starting at the bud stage. Growers often sample by tapping the blossom clusters of strawberry plants into shallow trays. This works fine for the nymphs (the most injurious stage) (figures 2,3). However, adults fly quickly when disturbed and are often unseen. Because adults can fly long distances, an outbreak may occur suddenly. Regular sampling and sweeping are needed to detect such infestations.

Scouting Techniques

The most consistent method is sampling a number of blossoms across the field. Blossoms are tapped into a white tray or pan and the number of nymphs recorded. This does not record the number of adults, as they will readily fly away when disturbed. A sweep net may be more useful for sampling adult populations. Particular attention should be given if a nearby hay field has been cut recently. Alfalfa hay is a preferred host for TPB and once cut, the adults will move out in search of new host plants for feeding and laying eggs.

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Cultural Control Strategies

A University of Massachusetts extension factsheet suggests the following cultural control strategies as well: a) avoid mowing nearby fields during bloom or early green fruit stage; b) control weeds in and around the strawberry field which can act as alternative hosts; and c) avoid planting strawberries near alfalfa which attracts TPB.

Figure 2: Fifth instar tarnish plant bug nymph stage.

Figure 3: Fifth instar tarnish plant bug nymph stage.

Figure 4: Seedy-end strawberry.

Control of TPB and Protection of Pollinators

Since the most effective time to control and prevent damage to the flower is when strawberries are at bloom stage it is important to take all precautions to protect the pollinators visiting the plants at this time (table 1). Apply insecticide when honeybees and other pollinators are least active, early in the morning or at dusk.
Remember that these pollinators are required for fruit set to occur and increase berry yields. One or two sprays at early and mid-bloom are usually quite effective at controlling the first generation of nymphs.

Table 1: Strawberry Tarnish Plant Bug Management Chart

Trade Name	Insecticide Group	Bee Toxicity*	Trade Name	Insecticide Group	Bee Toxicity
Cygon 480-ag	1B	Very	Zivata	3A	Very
Diamante 4	1B	Very	Aceta 70WP	4A	Very
Up-Cyde 2.5EC	3A	Very	Assail 70WP	4A	Very
Decis 100EC	3A	Very	Rimon 10EC	15	Moderately
Poleci 2.5EC	3A	Very	Beleaf 50SG	29	Moderately
Labamba	3A	Very	Silencer 120EC	3A	Very
Cormoran	4A,15	Very	Matador 120EC**	3A	Very
BioTitan WP	NC	Very	Aceta 70WP	4A	Moderately

Note: Confirm on the label if products are registered for use in Manitoba, and there are no restrictions on regions (i.e. BC only). The product label is a legal document, and label instructions must be followed. The information provided above is general information only.

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