



**HAMILTON
AGRONOMY**

One of the most important things we help grow is trust.

Words to grow by...

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Summer 2011

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Mild Winter Means Heavy Pest Population Projected

A mild Michigan winter was good for insect populations, but could spell trouble for young fruits and vegetables, Hamilton Agronomists warn. Of note: corn borer is flying already, perhaps 2-4 weeks ahead of its norm. The pressure will be here all season, whereas growers usually don't deal with the pest until mid-July. Frequent storms from the south have moved up other pests, as well. Hamilton Agronomists are projecting additional infestations of leaf hopper, more aphids, and possibly a few pests the area usually doesn't see.

"Keep a more vigilant eye," suggests Hamilton Agronomist Matt Lyons. "It has to be about protecting yield. Hamilton can do the scouting. Because we scout on a regular basis and cover a broad area - even up to 50 miles away from some customer's farms, we have a unique advantage in tracking pests. We can see what's happening within a region, and alert the growers we work with a bit earlier, better preparing them to best mitigate risks from pest pressures." To line up scouting, call Hamilton Agronomy, or find them at www.hfb.com.



Base Leafhopper Treatment on Bug Count

Potato leafhoppers have reached west central Michigan. The non-native leaf-feeder favors alfalfa but, when harvested, moves to neighboring crops ranging from potatoes and soybeans to apple and chestnut trees. Ideally, control occurs in alfalfa crops, where it can quickly cause economic damage and reduce both yield and the crop's nutritional value to livestock.

Whatever your crop, scout now, looking for wedge-shaped adults, pale-green with white eyes and about 1/8-inch in length. Wingless larvae are yellow-green. The hoppers can be found on leaf undersides.

Larvae move in a sideways manner when bothered. Plants can be damaged both by immature and mature adults. While feeding, adults leave behind toxins in their saliva which causes the leaf damage. The toxins interfere with normal cell growth and block the flow of fluid, resulting in leaves that exhibit "hopperburn."

Michigan State University entomologists recommend scouting, then treating based on the population found. Thresholds and treatments vary by crop, so consult with your Hamilton Agronomist for your specific needs.



Codling Moth, Oriental Fruit Moth Infest Apple, Pear Orchards

Several area orchards have shown significant numbers of Oriental fruit moth (OFM) and Codling moth. These pests can rapidly reach economic threshold levels with 20-90% of fruit affected. Pests tunnel to the core of apples and pears. Late maturing varieties are more likely to suffer severe damage as compared to earlier-maturing varieties.



Viticulture Day Planned for July 27, 2011

The Southwest Michigan Research and Extension Center will conduct its Viticulture Field Day this coming July 27th. The annual open house, focused on grapes, provides tours of grape research plots and allows grape growers to examine different cultural techniques and look at grape varieties and clones. MSU researchers and extension personnel also discuss their current projects. A trade show is included with a vineyard sprayer demonstration. This open house also includes lunch, dinner and a tasting of Michigan and other regional wines. For more information, contact Melissa Franklin at 269-657-8213 or msue80@msu.edu.

Closely Monitor Rose Chafer, Now Feeding

Rose chafers are among the first pests being seen on this season's fruit crop. Adult beetles are tan with darker red-brown legs, and about 12 millimeters in size. Hamilton Agronomist Matt Lyons says, "As Rose chafers collect on plants to feed and mate, they strip leaves much like a Japanese beetle. Unfortunately, they are poisonous to birds and have few natural enemies." Scout carefully to monitor populations, which can explode overnight to severely damage young trees causing fruit drop or removal of grapes from young clusters. Areas near grassy borders and on particularly sandy soils are most susceptible. Numerous control options are available. Hamilton Agronomists can help growers choose optimal products to fit the infestation level and the budget.



Scout Potatoes for Late Blight

Potato growers in Hamilton Agronomy's southern market surrounding Holland are facing conditions of increased risk for potato late blight. The risk varies from low to moderate for growers in the Traverse City area. Michigan State University (MSU) has made late blight risk monitoring easy for growers. A website found at www.lateblight.org allows growers to view maps, current risk levels and forecasts along with recommended fungicide rates. The site also provides tips on identifying other foliar and tuber diseases.

Weather Pattern Points to Anthracnose in Blueberries

Anthracnose fruit rot or "ripe rot" causes yield and quality losses to blueberry crops. Scouting should begin now, especially in zones infested in previous years. Pruning and old, dead twig removal can help manage spreading of the disease. This maximizes air movement and plant drying. Look for orange spore masses on last year's fruiting stems. Frequent rains this spring have likely helped disperse spores from the fungi's fruiting bodies, spreading infection to flowers, fruit and other blueberry tissues. On fruit, the infection will not appear until ripening begins. If you spot evidence of the disease, contact your Hamilton Agronomist for support.



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