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Hello Fruit Growers!

The newsletters will come a bit more frequently now as we head into the growing season. Although it has been cool today (Tuesday), the long range weather forecast is for our temperatures to be above normal for May with average precipitation. It will not be long before the Haskaps are in bloom as in the photo above. I heard today that in Michigan the sweet cherries are in full bloom but cold and windy weather has meant no pollinator activity. Hopefully, our season gets off to a better start.

Now that night-time temperatures are mostly above freezing, this is the time to apply a dormant oil spray if needed. I have European Fruit Scale insects in my orchard that I am working to eradicate and part of my routine is to hit everything in the orchard and even ornamentals with a dormant oil spray in both the fall and the spring.

The place that I am finding that it is most difficult to kill the little buggers is on the Haskaps. I discovered that last year's brood found a safe place from my sprays by moving under the loose bark that is characteristic of Haskaps. Although I couldn't see them, I knew they were there because I saw ants already coming to harvest their dew. Upon peeling back the loose bark I discovered where they were hiding.



The photos above show last year's adult (oyster-shaped bump to the right of the vertical shoot) on the branch followed by a photo of a different branch showing the exposed brood (small bumps) that will suck on the plant this year, grow to be an adult and create thousands of young. My solution was to fire up the pressure washer to blow off most of the loose bark and hopefully some of the insects. (I'll let you know if this unduly damages the plant.) The following day I applied the dormant oil spray.

The next spray to consider this time of year is a Copper spray should you have problems with fungus on any of your trees. Our Royalty crab is in a place where it receives less than adequate sun, and is in an environment with less air circulation and more moisture than is desired. It had a fungal infection last year, so I tried to pick up, bag and dispose of any leaves last fall that might harbor fungal spores. This week I will apply a copper spray to eliminate any remaining spores on the tree. Home Depot has a RTU (ready to use) Bonide Liquid Copper Fungicide should you need a limited amount.

I have had some questions about pruning currants and gooseberries. It seems most of our conversation is about tree fruits, but we shouldn't overlook these productive and tasty fruits. A very useful publication is the [Guide on Growing Currants and Gooseberries](#) posted by the University of Idaho Extension.

As for notices of interest, the Government Hill Commons Orchard is looking to hire a summer teen intern. This is a great opportunity for someone interested in learning about growing fruit to understudy with Paul Lariviere. If you know of someone who might be a good fit, please click the link for the [job description](#).

Dione White emailed me and has several haskap's that she no longer wants. She knows the varieties of some, but not others. If you are interested, call Dione at (907) 441-7542. Also, if you haven't been to Costco recently, you might take a look as I am told that they have Valentine and Crimson Passion cherries. For the price you can't go too wrong if you are looking for cherries.

All the best,

Mark Wolbers  
President, APFGA