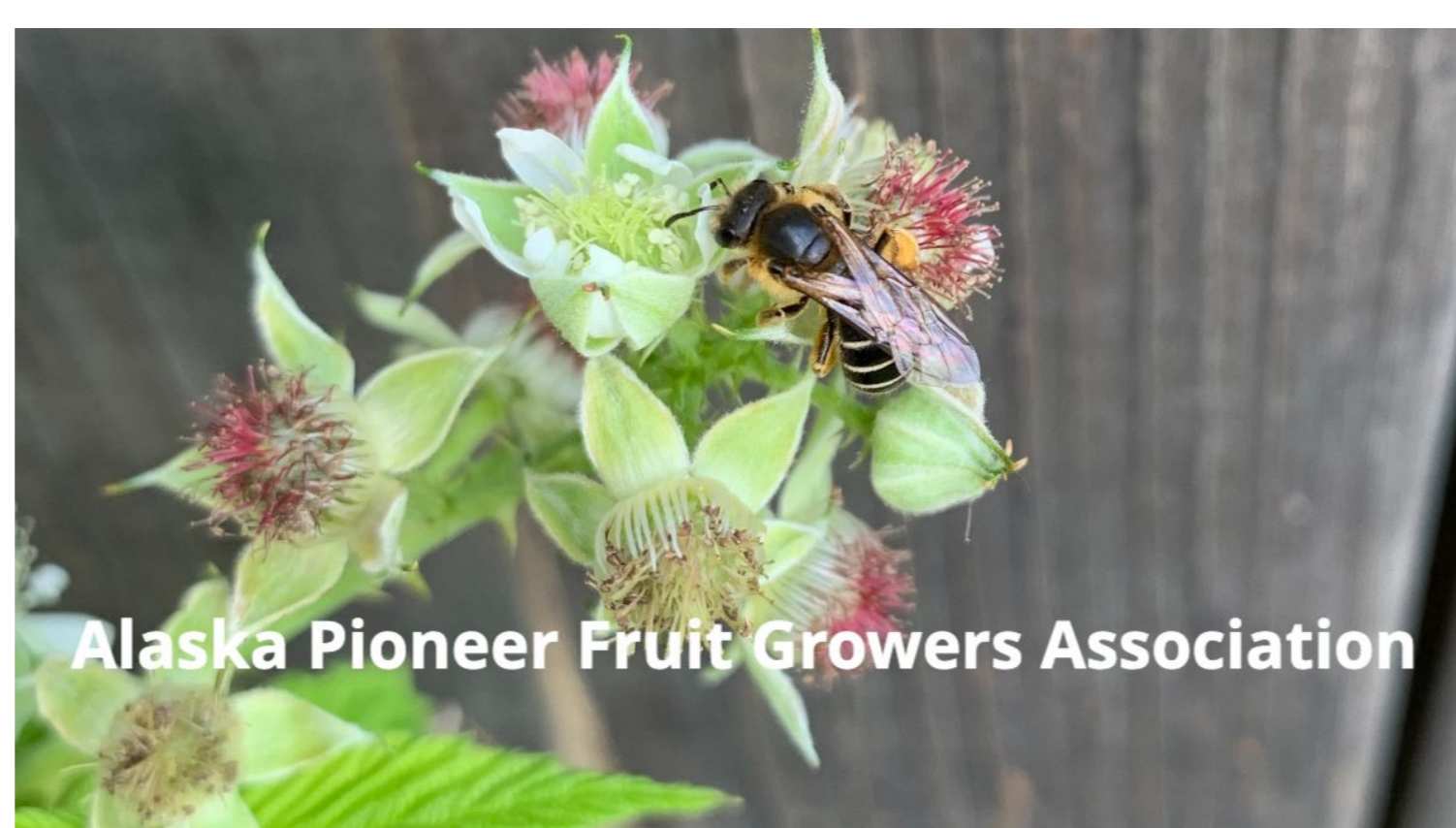


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Hello Fruit Growers!

I have been trying to be observant of pollinators this summer, and the small native pollinator pictured above seems to be doing a fair amount of work in our yard. In the photo he is busy pollinating the "Jewel" Black Raspberry. Everything except the bottom 6 inches of the canes were winter killed, so it had to grow new laterals. Glad to see it finally flower, but this variety seems to not be well suited for our climate. If you know the name of this insect, send me an [email](#).

This is the time of year when stores are trying to clear out their plants. I was in an Anchorage Home Depot this past Sunday and they still had a couple of Haskaps (Tundra, Borealis) on sale for 50% off. The plants were not in prime shape, but would recover nicely if given a home. If you are looking for plants, check your local stores and nurseries. You might find some bargains on something you are looking for.

We have been enjoying our first crop of the June bearing strawberry cultivar AC Wendy that we planted this spring. They should crop a couple weeks earlier next year once established. Berry size is good and consistent. Flavor is excellent and reminds me a bit of the cultivar Honeoye.

The haskaps (aka honeyberries) are ripening nicely. Hopefully, you have been watering regularly so that your berries become full-size. You can check the ripeness of haskaps by biting them in half to see if they are blue or still green inside. Don't be fooled into thinking they are ripe just because the birds are eating them. The birds respond only to the color on the outside!

The first haskap variety that we pick in the summer is "Cinderella." The berries on the top with sun exposure are ripe first. We like to pick those as soon as they are ripe rather than waiting for the inside berries to ripen. Cinderella berries are good size with excellent flavor, but if over-ripe they become soft, can fall apart when picked, and then will clump together somewhat when frozen.

It was good that we were in the haskaps early because next to Cinderella, I found a branch of Berry Blue that was heavily infested with [European Fruit Lecanuim Scale](#). (photo below). As you may recall, I took the unusual step of power-washing the haskaps this spring to try to remove the loose bark hiding places that the insects were under. They were thwarting my dormant oil sprays, and I apparently missed the branch in the photo. Good news was, despite missing this branch, the power wash was overall relatively effective and did not seem to harm the plants.



Now, finding an infected branch was not all bad because I have been working to identify the approximate date that the crawlers emerge in Alaska, and now I know. Crawlers are the emerging young that hatch under the mother shell. The shell protects them from pesticides, but when the crawlers come out, they are vulnerable. So, knowing when they begin to emerge is useful if you wish to apply a spray program.

My photo illustrates nicely this moment of the life cycle of these insects. On the branches are this year's adult females (kind of look like oyster shells). Each female can hatch over 1,000 crawlers. The crawlers are the tiny dots on the branch. They crawl out from the shell and move onto the leaves. You can see some already on the leaf (specks). They will begin sucking the plant juices and stay there until fall when they move back to overwinter on the branches and form a shell to start the cycle over. Like aphids, they produce a sweet dew that coats the leaves and fruit below them and causes black sooty fungus to grow.

The easiest preventative spray regime for our orchards is an all-season horticultural oil applied in the spring at green-tip and again in the fall after leaf drop. This is a good practice, regardless of whether you have scale or not. However, now that I know the emergence date of the crawlers, I have the option of spraying at this point in their life-cycle as well.

The Haskaps are loaded with fruit, and their layered growth habit makes it challenging to get a spray on all the leaf surfaces. With this in mind, I have decided to use [AzaMax](#), a derivative of Neem Oil that is highly effective on sucking insects. This will allow me to continue to pick fruit when needed. Because the crawlers do not all emerge at once, I will be on a weekly spray regime for the next few weeks. I am hopeful that I can reduce the number that make it back to the branches in the fall, since it has proven difficult to eradicate them there on Haskaps. Fruit trees are easy by comparison.

I want you to be educated and prepared for this pest. It is here in Alaska and birch trees can serve as host plants. As you can see from the picture, the crawlers are tiny! They can be spread by birds, or even the wind. Natural predatory insects do exist, but it doesn't seem that they alone can manage to check an infestation here in Alaska. Be watchful for insect dew, or sooty mold on your plants. It is only a matter of time before this pest is more prevalent.

Cherries are starting to turn color. The fruit set on our Evans is relatively light this year, but the Carmine Jewel, Romeo and Juliet bushes are loaded. It will be interesting to hear how everyone's fruit trees and bushes have performed at the end of the season.

Speaking of cherries, I have one Juliet cherry that I started as a small 6-inch plug purchased through the club a few years ago. I loosely draped a metal tag around it when I got it. It is important to check your metal tags each year. The cherry is now 5 feet tall and the tag was tight against the trunk! Trees or branches can be strangled by the metal tag wire. I have moved most of my tags off the trees and onto the rodent screen at the base of the tree to avoid accidental tagulation (strangulation by metal tag). In any case, it is good to check the fit each year.

Finally, I am happy to report that master horticulturalist Paul Lariviere, has agreed to host an orchard tour for APFGA (members only) of the Government Hill Commons Orchard. Paul has led the planting, grafting, and espalier efforts there, and the results are pretty impressive. Please join us on Saturday, July 31, 2021 at 2:00 pm and check out the wide selection, varieties and methods of fruit trees being grown. Click the links for [directions](#) and orchard tour [guidelines](#).

All the best,

Mark Wolbers
President, APFGA