



Integrated Pest Management Program

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UConn Extension

Fruit Sunburn: August 6, 2022

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It doesn't matter what type of fruit you are growing, sunburn can impact them making much of the fruit unmarketable. This is the time when many tree fruit growers are removing suckers and grape growers are removing leaves to expose fruit to more sun, particularly this year with our heat waves. A downside to these regular cultural practices is an increase in sunburn injury to fruit. Be sure to leave enough foliage so that fruit that was in the shade is now not fully exposed to the sun or sunburn damage will be more likely.

What materials can you apply to help reduce sunburn? There are a few materials that have been shown to work. Raynox Plus (Valent USA) was shown in a study at Rutgers University to be effective on apples. “Two years of trials suggest that just the west side of the row in a north south orchard orientation needs to be treated. The lower rate of 1 gallon/acre appeared to provide adequate control in 2016.” However, tall slender spindle blocks where trees are thin should be treated so all fruit is protected. This product is labeled ONLY for apples.

GrowForce Nutriscreen (Vivid Life Sciences) has a rate of 3-4 quarts/acre. This is labeled for tree fruit, grapes and strawberries but not brambles.

Several growers have asked about using Surround. Growers using a water dump prior to packing tree fruit can remove the residue. Those using brushes on dry fruit are not likely to remove enough of the residue. For other growers, without rain to remove residue prior to harvest, this is not a viable option. See the label for additional restrictions.

There is nothing labeled for sunburn protection of brambles. Shade cloth works but it is expensive. However, when looking to next year and beyond, climate change is real so investing in shade cloth may be worth the expense if you are losing a high volume of berries to sunburn. Pick-your-own bramble operations can post a picture of sunburn to let customers know what they are seeing, and the berries are alright to eat. We do that and they are OK with it. Sunburned blueberries are not good for eating. At the same time, impacted fruit are not something you want to pick for retail sale – customers won't buy it.



Photo: Amy Irish-Brown, MSU Extension



Photo: omafra.gov.on.ca



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