North Mississippi Fruit and Vegetable Growers Newsletter

August 2015 Newsletter

Dr. Jeff Wilson – Regional Horticulture Specialist

I hope all of you have had a great summer with growing your produce. We have been busy here at the NMREC with research that is directly beneficial to your farms. Casey and I will be hosting a Field Day on August 26 to showcase this research to you. The details are below and we hope to see you there.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Fruit & Vegetable Producer Field Day

August 26th, 2015 at NMREC (Verona) from 7:00-10:15 a.m.
We will have our first annual fruit & vegetable producer 'summer field day'. This gives each of you an opportunity to see the research that is being conducted in real time. We will meet early to register at 6:30 and get started with the tour of Casey's research projects by 7:00 am. After an hour or so, we will move inside to the auditorium to hear a few short programs and give everyone time to ask questions and talk with other growers. We plan to be done by 10:15 so you can get back to the farm and harvest for the next day's markets. We hope to see you all there.

Fall Flower & Vegetable Tour

September 26, NMREC, Verona, from 9:00 am – 2:00 pm.
Come and see all the horticulture research being conducted here in Verona. There will be lectures, garden tours, vendors, and more. This event is primarily for home gardeners, but is a great chance to get caught up on some of the research going on here at our facility. If you can't come in August, try to make it here in September.

Control Insect Pests on Commercial Pumpkins
Blake Layton, Extension Entomology Specialist

Producers with patches of commercial pumpkins need to be aware of several insect pests: Although cucumber beetles will attack emerging pumpkin seedlings, most crops should already be beyond this point. But heavy populations of cucumber beetles will damage blooms and will also cause unsightly feeding scars on rinds of mature fruit.

Squash bugs can cause plants to wilt and die even after they have begun to run, and sub-lethal effects of heavy squash bug infestations can reduce growth, vigor, and production. Also, squash bugs vector yellow vine disease. Watch for the dark grey adults and their ash-grey nymphs around the base of plants.

Squash vine borer larvae can cause even large vines to wilt and die overnight. The black and orange day-flying moths lay their eggs on the leaves and stems. Newly hatched larvae bore into

the stems and make their way to the base of the plant. By this time they are large caterpillars, and their feeding can kill enough vascular tissue to cause vines to wilt.

Pickleworms do not overwinter here and do not occur in large numbers every year, but they can be especially damaging when they do occur. The small moths lay their eggs on blooms. Newly hatched larvae feed on blooms at first but eventually bore into the fruit, leaving a BB-sized hole with a bit of extruding frass. This causes young fruit to rot, but such damage can even occur on fruit that are near harvest. This damage is initially difficult to detect, but such damage can cause significant problems in pumpkins as they are being marketed—"You sold me a bad pumpkin!"

If you are growing pumpkins to sell, it is a good idea to control these pests by making regular insecticide sprays (7 to 10 days). Spray as late in the day as possible (right at dusk) to minimize impact on pollinators. Pyrethroid insecticides like Mustang Max (zeta-cpermethrin), Tombstone (cyfluthrin) and Brigade (bifenthrin) will control all of the pests mentioned above, but stay alert for spider mites and whiteflies and include products that work on these pests if necessary. Including a product like Radiant (spinetoram) or Intrepid (methoxyfenozide) in the spray mix will improve control of pickleworm and vine borer.

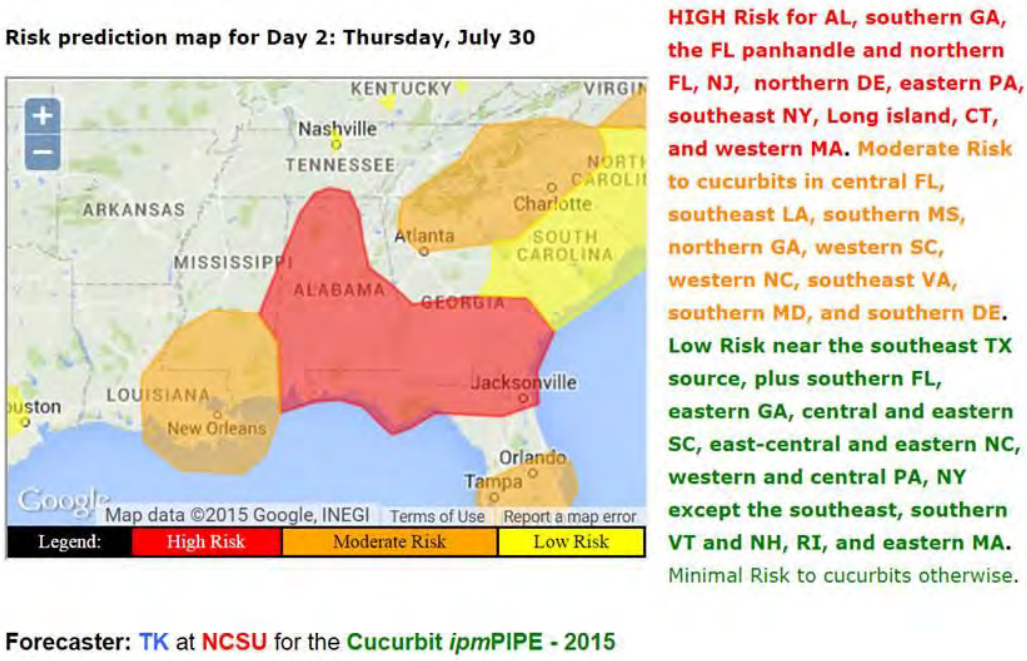
Cucurbit Diseases in the Late Summer & Early Fall
Rebecca A. Melanson, Extension Plant Pathologist

Cucurbit downy mildew (CDM) (photo below and additional photos at:http://cdm.ipmpipe.org/node/22) can be a serious disease of cucurbit crops (cucumber, squash, pumpkin, watermelon, cantaloupe). Symptoms of this disease typically occur only on leaves and begin as slightly chlorotic to bright yellow lesions on the top of a leaf. Lesions may maintain this coloration or may become necrotic and brown. In most cucurbits, lesions have irregularly shaped margins; however, in cucumbers, lesions are angular. Under favorable conditions, the lesions on the underside of the leaf may have a downy appearance and may have a gray to purplish coloration.

Photo from: http://cdm.ipmpipe.org/node/22

The cucurbit downy mildew pathogen requires a living host to survive and does not overwinter in areas where freezing temperatures prevent cucurbit production. The spores of the pathogen, however, can travel on air currents from areas warm enough for cucurbits to survive the winter to areas where the pathogen has not overwintered. A forecasting system and the CDM ipmPIPE initiative was developed and started in order to monitor and track the occurrence and movement of this disease in North America in the hopes of helping producers to make timely fungicide

applications for CDM management. The CDM ipmPIPE website (http://cdm.ipmpipe.org/) produces cucurbit downy mildew forecasts with maps highlighting geographic areas that are forecasted to have a high, moderate, or low risk of potential cucurbit downy mildew spread and development (example below). The most current forecasts and maps can be found at: http://cdm.ipmpipe.org/current-forecast.



Cucurbit downy mildew has been reported on cucurbits in both Louisiana and Alabama this year so it is likely that this disease is also present in Mississippi. Some resistant cucurbit varieties are available, but fungicides are generally necessary to manage disease. Please share this information with your cucurbit-producing clients and let them know that they should consider applying a fungicide for prevention and management of this disease. A list of fungicides labelled for use against cucurbit downy mildew as well as an efficacy table of these fungicides is available in the 2015 Vegetable Crop Handbook (http://www.thepacker.com/grower/2015-southeastern-us-vegetable-crop-handbook).

USDA Expands Crop Insurance Options for Fruit and Nut Growers
By: **Christina Herrick** | July 24, 2015

The USDA announced the expansion of crop insurance to provide additional options for fruit and nut producers. The Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO) and the Actual Production History (APH) Yield Exclusion are now available to cover fresh fruit/nuts in select counties beginning with the 2016 crop year.

SCO is an area-based policy endorsement offered by USDA's Risk Management Agency that can be purchased to supplement an underlying crop insurance policy. It covers a portion of losses not covered by the same crop's underlying policy.

For many growers who have experienced the unpredictability of the past few seasons, the APH Yield Exclusion allows farmers, with qualifying crops in eligible counties, to exclude low yields in exceptionally bad years (such as a year in which a natural disaster or other extreme weather occurs) from their production history when calculating yields used to establish their crop

insurance coverage. Crop years are eligible when the average per planted acreage yield for the county was at least 50% below the simple average for the previous 10 consecutive crop years. It will allow eligible producers to receive a higher approved yield on their insurance policies through the federal crop insurance program.

Coverage Areas
SCO will now be available in select counties for almonds, apples, blueberries, grapes, peaches, potatoes, prunes, safflower, tomatoes, and walnuts for the 2016 crop year. Producers of apples, blueberries, grapes, peaches, potatoes, prunes, safflower, tomatoes, and walnuts in select counties will have the option to elect the APH Yield Exclusion for the 2016 crop year.

Online tools designed to help growers determine the best crop insurance options are. The **Crop Insurance Decision Tool** and the **SCO/APH Yield Exclusion mapping tool** can help growers determine eligible crops, availability, get general estimates, and understand coverage options. For more information on supplemental coverage, **visit the SCO site**.

MSU-ES Contact info:

Below are the contact names and numbers that are directly related to the association and your production issues. Please start with your local county Extension agent to help find answers to your questions. They are capable of handling your request and have access to all of our resources

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