



San Joaquin

Pomologist

po•mo•lo•gy\ po'mälej\ n [fr. L *pomum* fruit + *logia* - logy study] 1: the science of the cultivation of fruits 2: the science or practice of growing, storing, processing and marketing fruits

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Getting walnut trees ready for winter

Last year in early November, temperatures dropped below freezing on several nights, and some walnut orchards suffered cold injury, especially young orchards in cold and low-lying areas. Observations vary, but most people seem to agree that walnuts, if they have not gone completely dormant, can be damaged at temperatures of 32°F or lower. Young trees, particularly of vigorous varieties like Tulare, Vina and Hartley growing in good conditions, are more susceptible than mature trees. Trees become more resistant to cold as they go dormant in fall, and it takes temperatures in the low-to-mid twenties to injure fully dormant trees. Trees that go into the winter dry, whether they are young or old, can also be damaged by low fall or winter temperatures.

By carefully managing tree growth and water status in September and October, the risk of cold injury can be minimized. In young orchards, begin cutting back on irrigation in mid-September until growth stops. This will encourage trees to begin "hardening off" and make them more resistant to cold. Once trees stop growing, and as temperatures start to cool off, apply enough water to keep trees from becoming dry but not so much that they start growing again.

In mature blocks, there seems to be more risk of cold injury from trees going into winter dry than from encouraging continued shoot growth in fall. This is probably because the energy demands of the developing crop and water cut-off before harvest cause trees to "naturally" slow in growth in late summer. If rain does not come soon after harvest, blocks with low soil moisture should be irrigated lightly after harvest to promote cold-hardiness.

"Stay the course" with cherry buckskin disease

Cherry orchards with suspected buckskin-infected trees, or healthy orchards with infected blocks nearby, should be sprayed to maintain an effective insecticide residue through mid-October. I have observed that many growers are vigilant during summer but grow lax in September and October. This is the time when the concentration of the organism that causes buckskin disease is at its highest level in the tree and is most likely to be spread within and between orchards by the leafhoppers that spread this disease.

We are testing several new insecticides this year for controlling mountain leafhopper in cherries, and some look promising. We hope one or more will soon be registered for use in cherries. Until then, the most effective currently available material is esfenvalerate (Asana®). A 12-ounce per acre application provides at least 4-6 weeks of effective leafhopper control. Check with your PCA for a specific recommendation.

Upcoming Events

**Sept. 10
10 am**

Field meeting: *Alternative strategies for codling moth control in walnuts*
Chiappe Farms (Stanley Rd. south of Hwy. 4, near Farmington)

**Sept. 11
9:30 am**

Field meeting: *Apple pre-sorting, Gala strains, OBLR*
Prima Frutta Pkg (Comstock Rd. east of Tully, near Linden)

**October 9
10 am**

Field meeting: *Progress in cherry rootstock testing*
More details forthcoming