



your Lake County HORTICULTURAL NOTES

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1990 WALNUT CROP LOOKS GOOD

Despite some sunburn and more walnut blight than usual, Lake County will harvest a large and high quality crop. Fortunately, good yields and nut size coincide with a positive market outlook, especially for in-shell varieties.

Here are some tips to prevent tree damage due to shakers. Remember, the tree will still be there after the nuts are off, take care to protect it during harvest:

- HAVE A CONSCIENTIOUS, WELL-TRAINED SHAKER OPERATOR
- trees should be sufficiently dry before harvest
- adjust shaker head pressure correctly
- check machine condition regularly during harvest
- check, rotate and service pads often
- grease slings once per hour and check regularly for wear
- position the shaker head properly
- DON'T RUSH! Unclamp only after the machine has stopped shaking

Have a great harvest!

ZINC DEFICIENCY CORRECTION

Zinc deficiency is the most widespread micro-nutrient problem in California trees and vines. It is vital for shoot growth and leaf expansion, and a consistent treatment program is necessary in certain soils to prevent chronic leaf symptoms, shoot dieback and yield/fruit size reduction. After three dry winters, nutrient imbalance symptoms of all types are relatively severe. If symptoms and/or tissue analysis has confirmed a zinc problem, I urge either fall (pears), winter (spur-pruned grapes), or spring (all tree/vine crops) treatment.

Grapes - Mild symptoms were quite prevalent this spring and early summer. 36% zinc sulfate may be applied to fresh, non-bleeding pruning cuts in spur-pruned varieties. If soil is dry and it is very cold, consider waiting to apply pre-bloom foliar zinc in the spring, the normal time to treat cane-pruned varieties.

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Pears - Apply 36% zinc sulfate just prior to leaf fall to burn zinc into wood and leaf sites (remember, no oil within 30 days!). Follow-up spring applications of zinc chelate or oxide, although perceived as slightly risky, may be warranted in severely affected orchards. I especially encourage treating Red Sensation blocks which exhibited delayed foliation and little-leaf symptoms these past dry years.

Walnuts - Mark affected trees now and plan to apply 36% zinc sulfate or zinc chelate next spring just after full pistillate bloom when most leaves have lost their reddish color. Several applications may be needed. Given the heavy 1990 crop and dry conditions, symptoms may be severe in some blocks next year.

For all crops, details on rates, gallonage, etc. were published in the November 1988 and April 1989 Hort Notes. Contact me for copies or for assistance with identification and/or treatment.

PEARS FEATURED AT UPCOMING MARKETING CONFERENCE

The Farmer to Consumer Conference for the lower Sacramento Valley; Specialties for the 90's, will be held on Saturday, October 20 from 7:30 a.m. to evening at U.C. Davis. The conference is sponsored by UC Small Farm Center, CDFA Direct Marketing Program, UC Extension and several UCCE offices.

Although focusing on Sacramento Valley operations, the topics will be useful to anyone interested in specialty produce production and marketing. Of particular interest to Lake County growers is a workshop featuring Sally Strew of Pettigrew Fruit Company in Walnut Grove, who has revived the demand for French Butter pears - otherwise known as Hardy. Pettigrew also grows Comice and Bartletts. Also, the conference keynote speaker will be Charlie Hoppin, who farms 1800 acres of vegetables and fruit near Yuba City. Both of these growers will discuss unique production and marketing experiences.

Besides several commodity-specific workshops, there will be a morning Direct Marketing Tour of the Davis Farmers Market and the Suisun Valley, also a major pear district.

Cost of the conference is \$25.00 and tour \$15.00. Pre-registration for the tour must be postmarked by October 12; conference registration may be paid at the door. Contact our office for a detailed agenda and registration materials.

GEOHERMAL RESOURCE SEMINAR

Finding and developing low temperature geothermal resources for heating greenhouses, aquaculture farms, buildings and dehydration equipment will be among the topics covered in a two-day seminar scheduled for November 9 & 10, 1990 at the Konocti Harbor Resort and Spa in Kelseyville. "Applications of Low Temperature

Geothermal Resources" is a short-term, 1/2-unit college course designed for greenhouse growers, aquaculturalists, agricultural processors and anyone involved with geothermal resource development. Sponsors are Mendocino College and the Lake County Resource Management Division.

The waterfront resort's geothermal wells, Lake County's Agricultural Park and the Mendocino College Geothermal Greenhouse will be included in the class discussions and field trips. Equipment selection, cost analysis and regulatory/environmental considerations also will be covered.

Seminar instructors will be Mark Dellinger, Lake County's Geothermal Coordinator; Kevin Rafferty, Mechanical Engineer, Oregon Institute of Technology Geo-Heat Center; and Gib Cooper, Mendocino College horticulture instructor and Lake County's Ag Park Manager. Course fee is \$3.50 and interested individuals may register through October 10, 1990 by calling (707) 263-4944.

OCTOBER CHECKLIST

Cover crops - Winter cover crops should be seeded by mid-month before cold weather slows growth.

Pre-plant site preparation - Ideally, replant sites should be backhoed, filled and fumigated so soil can settle over the winter prior to planting. Fumigation before re-planting, though not a standard practice in Lake County, has been shown to greatly hasten young tree growth.

Remove weak/dead limbs - Seeing dead cordons/limbs is easier while foliage is still on the plant. If Eutypa is the culprit, however, it is advisable to wait until after the major rainy season and accompanying heavy spore load before pruning.

Rodent damage - Successive dry winters have increased gopher and vole survival and accompanying damage. If trees declined or collapsed during summer, check for girdling and plan an aggressive rodent control program, which incidently, includes WEED CONTROL.

Weed control - Apply pre-emergence materials ahead of fall rains. Weed control is difficult in the spring and summer. Fall is the best time.

Sincerely,

Rachel Elkins

Rachel Elkins
Farm Advisor

