

The Blueberry News

Official Newsletter of the Florida Blueberry Growers' Association

Fall Issue, 2004

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Fall Blueberry Short Course

Thursday, October 21, 2004
Florida Farm Bureau Building
5700 SW 34th Street
Gainesville, Fla.

- 8:00 a.m.** **Late Registration** - Pre-registration is required to guarantee you a meal.
- 8:30 a.m.** **Welcome** - Ms. Carolee Howe, assistant director, Agricultural Policy, Florida Farm Bureau, Gainesville, Fla.
- 8:45 a.m.** **Results of fertilizer studies in pine bark culture** - Dr. Jeff Williamson, extension horticulturist, Horticultural Sciences Dept., IFAS, University of Florida, Gainesville, Fla.
- 9:15 a.m.** **Overview of blueberry varieties for use in Florida** - Dr. Paul Lyrene, plant breeder, Horticultural Sciences Dept., IFAS, University of Florida, Gainesville, Fla.
- 9:45 a.m.** **Break**
- 10:00 a.m.** **Update on promotional and research activities at the United States Highbush Blueberry Council**- Mr. Ken Patterson, grower and southern region USHBC representative.
- 10:10 a.m.** **Update on insect pest management in blueberry** - Dr. Oscar Libard, extension entomologist, Dept. of Entomology and Nematology, IFAS, University of Florida, Gainesville, Fla.
- 10:40 a.m.** **Available fungicides and their uses for Florida blueberry production** - Dr. Phil Harmon, extension plant pathologist, Plant Pathology Dept., IFAS, University of Florida, Gainesville, Fla.
- 11:10 a.m.** **Breakout groups to discuss Dormex, varieties, and fertilization practices.**
- 11:40 a.m.** **Breakout groups report on their discussions** - moderator, Mr. Joe Keel, FBGA president.
- 12:00 p.m.** **Lunch** - Sponsored by Driscoll's and Elixson Wood Products
- 1:00 p.m.** **FBGA Business Meeting** - Mr. Joe Keel, FBGA president, presiding.

Important Information about the short course -

Registration - Enclosed, please find a *pre-registration form* for the Fall Blueberry Short Course. **This form must be returned**

postmarked by October 12 to guarantee your meal. There is no registration fee for FBGA members provided their membership is up-to-date. Non-members will be asked to join, and delinquent members will be asked to renew their membership, or pay a \$20 registration fee per person. You can join or re-new your membership at the door but we need to know who is attending so **PLEASE RETURN THE PRE-REGISTRATION FORM by October 12.**

Directions to the Farm Bureau Building in Gainesville - Traveling north on I-75, take the first Gainesville exit on the south side of town (Williston Rd. or Hwy 121 exit). Go about 1,000 feet east toward Gainesville on Hwy 121 and turn south (right) on Hwy 23 (Rocky Point Rd /S. W. 34th Street). The Farm Bureau building is less than 1 mile south on the right side of the road. Drive around to the opposite side of the building which is the front of the building and faces I-75. Park there and enter. If you are coming on Hwy 441, turn west on Williston Rd. and go toward I-75. Turn south on 34th Street (Rocky Point Rd.) Just before you get to I-75.

Message From the President

The 2004 harvest should go down as one of the most successful years of Florida's young commercial blueberry industry. Above average fall chill hours, little or no early spring freeze events, and a nice dry, sunny, Florida spring worked to shape an almost perfect growing year.

Prices seemed to be good early and mid-season but unfortunately fell off rather rapidly in late April and early May with heavy rains from West Palm Beach to Hudson.

The eye of hurricanes Charley and Frances passed near or over several of our member farms in central Florida. Oh no! Here comes Ivan, a category five hurricane as it passed near Jamaica aimed for, you guessed it, central Florida. Well, as we all know now, Ivan missed us.

Now for 2004-2005 growing season - what a start! I've lived in Florida for 48 of my 49 years and I have never seen a crazier summer weather season. First, Charley stormed into Charlotte Harbor then up the middle of our state causing much destruction in its wake. We barely caught our breath when Frances came out of the Atlantic spreading a path of damage caused by high winds. Damage from the storms seem to be mostly plants that blew over on their sides, snapped off at the ground, and the stripping of leaves. Frances, a slow moving storm, dropped as much as 12 inches rain in some areas of central Florida. Farms without well-drained soil, or near creeks or ditches seemed to have the most damage.

In closing, I'd like to say it is an honor and a privilege to serve as your president. I am looking forward to working with all of you to help educate ourselves, as well as work to protect our Florida window, and keep the industry profitable for all of us for years to come.

Joe Keel, FBGA President

Bravo Fungicide Approved for Leaf Rust Control in Florida Blueberries

Florida now has a Special Local Needs label for use of Bravo Ultrex and Bravo WeatherStik to control leaf rust and Septoria leaf spot on blueberries. Directions call for applications to be made after fruit are harvested to control these diseases during the summer and fall. The labels can be viewed at the following website: <http://www.hos.ufl.edu/jgwwweb/williamson.htm>

1996 Bravo Study. We have looked at Bravo for several seasons as a possible control for these leaf diseases. Our results are summarized in the accompanying tables. In 1996, we compared Bravo with a combination spray of Benlate/captan which was the standard control for leaf diseases at that time. Rust was the major leaf disease present in that study. Captan (5 lb/a) plus Benlate (1 lb/a), Bravo (2 pints/a) and Bravo (4 pints/a) all reduced defoliation and incidence of infection from blueberry rust (*Pucciniastrum vaccinii*) compared to controls (Table 1).

The 4 pt./a rate of Bravo reduced leaf spot incidence slightly more than the 2 pts./a rate of Bravo. Generally, there were no significant differences in the efficacy of Bravo and Captan/Benlate sprays at controlling blueberry rust. Unsprayed shoot terminals were approximately 50% defoliated compared to approximately 2 to 4% defoliation for the various fungicide treatments. Visual ratings for defoliation revealed much lower levels of defoliation for all fungicide treatments compared to unsprayed controls on November 8 and November 26. In this study Bravo sprays appeared to be about as effective as Benlate/captan sprays.

2003 Bravo Study. Bravo WeatherStik was compared against 7 other materials for control of blueberry leaf rust. Please be aware that all of these materials are not currently labeled for use on blueberries. For example, the Section 18 label for Indar expired in September. Bravo showed excellent control of rust development on summer flush leaves (Table 1). The percentages of summer flush leaves with moderate to severe infections were significantly less for Bravo than for the unsprayed controls, or for some of the other fungicide treatments. Cabrio, Abound and Orbit also showed good control of rust. However, Abound and Cabrio are both strobilurin fungicides and have the potential for pathogen resistance. Orbit is labeled only for non-bearing blueberries in Florida. Cabrio, Abound and Bravo also showed the least disease development of any of the materials tested based on visual ratings of entire plants.

Collectively, the 1996 and 2003 studies show that Bravo, applied post-harvest, provides good to excellent control of blueberry rust. The addition of Bravo to a summer leaf disease spray program which currently contains strobilurin fungicides should provide adequate control of blueberry leaf rust, help prevent development of pathogen resistance to strobilurin fungicides, and increase the number of fungicide applications that could be made in any given year.

Table 1. Efficacy of post-harvest fungicide sprays for control of blueberry rust on 'Sharpblue' blueberry, 1996.

Treatment	Percent leaves defoliated ^z	Percent leaves infected ^y	Whole plant defoliation (%) ^x	
			11/8	11/26
Control	47.7 a	100.0 a	66 a	82 a
Benlate 50 WP + Captan 50 WP	2.4 b	30.3 c	19 b	30 b
Bravo Weather Stik (2 pt./a)	2.1 b	39.6 b	18 b	32 b
Bravo Weather Stik (4 pt./a)	3.5 b	26.4 c	20 b	34 b
Significance	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001

^z Percent of leaves defoliated from the uppermost 25 nodes on 5 randomly selected shoots in each of 6 replications.

^y Percent of leaves with leaf spots from the uppermost 25 nodes on 5 randomly selected shoots in each of 6 replications. Missing leaves were assumed to have leaf spots.

^x Visual ratings of percent defoliation of whole plants.

Table 2. Effect of fungicide sprays on leaf disease incidence of entire plants Oct. 22-24, 2003.

Treatment	Rating ^z
Cabrio	1.1 f
Abound	2.0 e
Bravo WS	2.1 e
Orbit	2.7 d
Indar	3.1 cd
Aliette	3.2 c
AgriFos	3.4 bc
Control	4.0 a

^z 1 = very light infection and defoliation; 5 = heavy leaf spot infection and defoliation

Jeff Williamson

Possible Effects of Hurricane Damage

There is no doubt that a direct hit from a strong hurricane can cause damage to blueberry plantings in many different forms. Heavy rains on the order of 8 to 12 inches can flood plants resulting in direct injury to the root systems and later injury from *Phytophthora* root rot which may not be readily apparent for several months. High winds can remove or damage leaves and buds. If a significant number of leaves are removed, or damaged to the point of being non-functional, adverse consequences will likely result.

Our research has shown that early fall defoliation can significantly reduce flower bud initiation and development needed for next year's crop. Each leaf initially has a vegetative bud in its axil that can potentially convert to a flower bud, usually during the fall. If a leaf is removed too early in the fall, the chances of the associated vegetative bud converting to a flower bud are greatly reduced. With significant early fall defoliation, the net result can be a large reduction in the number of flower buds from during the late fall and winter. Our research indicates that defoliation in September can cause a dramatic reduction in the number of flower buds formed.

Additionally, further development of an already existing flower bud can be retarded by early fall defoliation. That is, the number of florets per flower bud can be reduced which can also result in reduced yields the following spring. The above effects of early defoliation have been demonstrated experimentally with 'Sharpblue' and 'Misty' but probably apply to most cultivars.

With 'Star' a different response occurred in our experiments when entire plants were defoliated in early/mid September. These plants initiated a late season vegetative growth flush characterized by numerous short flushes primarily on the upper portions of the canes. These short flushes quickly set terminal buds and developed numerous flower buds in the leaf axils. However, since these flowers buds developed very late during the growing season, their bloom was delayed the following spring by 2 to 3 weeks. In this particular experiment, even though yields were not reduced by September defoliation, the resulting fruit were harvested much later than usual because of the delayed bloom period. In cases where leaves are damaged but plants are not defoliated, it is very difficult to guess what the effects on overall plant health and yield might be.

Jeff Williamson

BLUEBERRY PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Bob's Blueberry Farm and Nursery. West Pasco County. (727)863-4214 or toll free (888) 654-4214 Year around plant sales, southern highbush blueberry plants, all sizes and varieties, over 40,000 on hand. Call for prices and availability. Plan ahead, have the plants you need when you need them. Lic. no. 47227344.

Call the Doc! Doc Applications, Inc. is booking orders for the fall 2002 and beyond. We grow the latest varieties including Gulfcoast, Sharpblue, Sapphire, and Emerald bare root and in containers. Call Dave Weber (863)325-8215 for price and availability. Lic. no. 47219637.

Elixson Wood Products, Inc. Pine bark - shredded, nuggets, or fines available. Ph (904) 964-6649.

Honey Bees for Blueberry Pollination. We use the Buckfast strain, which pollinates at temperatures 20 cooler than other strains. Bees guaranteed for strength. \$20.00 per hive. Call Robbie Bell toll free (800) 822-1558; home (863) 285-7785; mobile (863) 698-9525.

Island Grove Ag. Products. Don't buy plants until you've talked to us. We have all varieties including the new highbush releases from U of F. We will grow specifically for your needs. Call Sheri Brothers or Ken Patterson at (352)481-5558. Lic. no. 47217870.

Jacto Sprayers. Save time and chemical cost with a Jacto Airblast Sprayer. Jacto is the number one sprayer in the blueberry and nursery industry and has proven itself in helping productivity. For more information or a demonstration, call Kenny Mitchem at Henry Mitchem Equipment, Leesburg, FL at (352) 787-4109.

Miller Blueberry Nursery. Rt. 3, Box 5700, Palatka, FL 32177, Telephone (386) 325-7373. Let us supply your blueberry plants. All varieties. All sizes. Bare root and potted. Please call for prices. Lic. no. 04720531.

Mixon Family Farm, Inc. We have excellent quality blueberry plants for sale. We have Misty as well as all the newest releases from the University of Florida including Sapphire, Jewel, Star and Sante Fe. We will custom grow for your specific needs. Call Jerry Mixon (863)439-8335 for price and availability. License no. 472255191

My Blue Heaven Blueberry Nursery. Southern highbush varieties. Centrally located in Dade City. Give us a call, we're happy

to help. Debra Troyer (352) 567-4256, 18414 Lawrence Rd., Dade City, FL 33523. Lic. no. 47221916.

Strickland Blueberry Farms and Nursery. 4956 Slaten Rd., Plant City, FL 33567 Phone (813) 754-3866. FAX: (813)754-8717. 'Gulfcoast' and 'Sharpblue' in 1, 15 and 25 gal. containers. Large quantities available. Come see an alternative planting method. Lic. no. 47220729.

Twenty-nine acre farm established in 1976, 5 acres are planted to blueberries, 7 more acres are ready for planting, and 17 acres in pine and cypress. All hwy frontage. Residence, 2 barns, tractor, overhead irrigation. Will divide if needed. Exc. pH levels. 3 miles north of Hwy 40 on C-314, Silver Springs, Marion County (352) 625-2378. Lester and Arlene Dinkins.

Advertising Information

We welcome advertising from blueberry nurseries and suppliers. The cost is 30 cents per word per issue of the newsletter in which your message appears. Send your blueberry-related message and a check payable to **FLORIDA BLUEBERRY GROWERS' ASSOCIATION** to our address given below under membership information. Advertisements and claims therein to do not constitute an endorsement by the Florida Blueberry Growers' Association or the University of Florida.

Membership Information

To join or renew your membership to the Florida Blueberry Growers Association, mail a check payable to **FLORIDA BLUEBERRY GROWERS' ASSOCIATION** to our address at:

Florida Blueberry Growers' Association
P.O. Box 141733
Gainesville, FL 32614

The Association annual dues depend on which membership category you fit best.

1. Regular Florida Member - \$10.00 per acre of blueberries, except a minimum of \$50.00 and a maximum of \$200.00.
2. Out-of -state member - \$50.00
3. Associate member - \$100.00 (Equipment and chemical companies, etc.)
4. Educational and Research - \$10.00 (University and USDA personnel who do not grow blueberries commercially)

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