

WINDOW ON AGRICULTURE

Office of the Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner

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October 2001

Marilyn Vernon

APPLE HARVEST 2001

Submitted by Suzanne Opbroek



It's closing in on the end of apple harvest. Every year the Agricultural Commissioner's Office tests apples for maturity. When a variety of apples has met the requirements for maturity our office releases them for harvest and sale. Seven varieties of apples are tested by the

Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner's Office they are: Gravenstein, McIntosh, Jonathan, Red Delicious, Golden Delicious, Rome, and Granny Smith. This year there was a particularly heavy apple crop. The unusually warm spring led to an earlier ripening on the early varieties, McIntosh apples were released on July 19, 2001. This was the earliest release date since records have been kept (1963). The unusually cool summer allowed the later varieties to mature closer to what would normally be expected. Rome and Granny Smith varieties were both released on September 13, 2001.

CONTINUING EDUCATION UPDATE

Submitted by Suzanne Opbroek

Fall is here! It is time to check if you need continuing education hours. Check your Private Applicator's Certificate to see when it expires. You need 2 hours of continuing education for each year that the certificate

was valid (for most that will mean a total of 6 hours). Continuing Education hours need to be completed and we need to verify that you attended the classes before the end of the year that your certificate expires, or you will have to re-take the test to keep your certificate valid. Commercial applicators also need to check if continuing education hours are needed, the number of hours needed will depend on what type of license or certificate you hold. We have two continuing education Classes this fall. On October 19 and 20 we will be sponsoring a Pest Control Management Update Class given through Santa Rosa Junior College (SRJC). This class has been approved for ten hours of continuing education; three are for Laws and Regulations. You can register for the class through SRJC, for further information please call the Agricultural Commissioner's Office. On November 29 we will hold our annual Growers' Continuing Education meeting at the Veterans Building in Santa Rosa. This meeting has been approved for two hours of continuing education, with one hour of Laws and Regulations (if you attend this meeting each year you will meet the required continuing education requirements for a Private Applicator's Certificate). Please mark this on your calendar and look for a flyer in your mail soon with more details.

RED GUM LERP PSYLLID

Submitted by Priscilla Lane

Ron Inman and Priscilla Lane of the Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner's staff, in conjunction with Dr. Dahlsten, University of California Berkeley, released a parasitoid of

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Red Gum Lerp Psyllid Continued

the Red Gum Lerp Psyllid. The Red Gum Lerp Psyllid is one of about 15 different eucalyptus-feeding insect species introduced into California since 1984. The Red Gum Lerp Psyllid *Glycapsis brimblecombei* was first detected in Los Angeles County in

1998. The insect feeds on plant fluids that it extracts from young leaves. Although this insect feeds on a broad range of Eucalyptus species, it prefers to colonize the red gum species.

The Red Gum Lerp Psyllid constructs a white conical cover of sugar, called a lerp, and feeds concealed under this shelter. The leaves are covered with small white cones and are often covered with sticky honeydew and black sooty molds.

The parasitoid *Psyllaephagus bliteus*, a tiny wasp that lays its eggs inside of the Red Gum Lerp Psyllid nymphs, was released on private property near Santa Rosa in September 2001. *Psyllaephagus bliteus* has a long host-feeding period for the female wasps and they kill the psyllid nymphs.

The Commissioner's staff is monitoring ten sticky traps placed at the release site. The sticky traps are a reliable method of estimating psyllid populations and the monitoring will continue for up to two years. The monitoring results will help Dr. Dahlsten determine if this tiny wasp will be an effective biological control agent against the Red Gum Lerp Psyllid.

New exotic pests are continually introduced into the California landscape, requiring new control efforts. One approach for control of the Red Gum Lerp Psyllid is systemic insecticides as a short-term and small-scale approach. Based on the number of infestations in many areas of the state this could result in the heavy use of chemical sprays in urban areas. Timing of applications is difficult and results are mixed. Insecticides are not

self-sustaining; therefore, the approach is at best only a stopgap measure until the long-term solution, biological control with natural enemies, can be implemented.

VINEYARD EROSION AND SEDIMENTATION CONTROL

Growers who have vineyard projects in progress need to have those projects winterized in the next few weeks. For new plantings soil disturbance must be finished by October 15, and winterization in by November 1. Growers that are replanting need to have soil disturbance finished by November 1, and winterization in by November 15.



All Level II and III projects require a winterization inspection to be sure the project is in compliance with the erosion and sediment control plans, Level I projects do not need an inspection.

To set an appointment to have your project checked for winterization, call the Agricultural Commissioner's Office at (707) 565-2371.

PLASTIC CONTAINER RECYCLE DAYS

Growers and businesses are reminded that the fall plastic pesticide container recycling days will be held on October 30 and 31.

On Tuesday, October 30, the event will be held at the Sonoma County Corporation yard at 19722 8th St. East in Sonoma.

On Wednesday, October 31, the collection location will be at the Healdsburg Transfer Station located at 166 Alexander Valley Rd.

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to 3:00 p.m.

The collection times for both days will be 9:30 a.m.

Plastic containers from one pint to 55 gallons will be accepted. The containers must be triple rinsed, dry and have holes punched in them.

Agricultural Plastics Recycle, Sonoma County Public Works, and the Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner's Office sponsor this event. A flyer will be sent out to past participants. For more information contact Pete Albers at (707) 565-2371.