Thinning has been tricky this year. The combination of good fruit set and poor thinning weather leads to underthinning. However, there will be a turn in the weather this weekend, which will give us a last chance to thin in southern orchards and a good opportunity to begin thinning in northern orchards. Expect good to aggressive thinning conditions this weekend and adjust your thinner mix as needed.

![Weather Influence on Apple Sensitivity to Chemical Thinners](image)

- **Excessive Thinning Risk! →**
- **Stronger weather influence for increased sensitivity →**
- **Increased sensitivity →**
- **INTERMEDIATE →**
- **Reduced sensitivity →**
- **Stronger weather influence for reduced sensitivity →**

Green columns show thinning sensitivity rating for apples up to 12mm diameter on unstressed trees for the 3 day window after application of thinner on morning of date listed. For evening application, use rating for the following day. Ratings reflect the influence of daytime cloud cover and night temperatures for 72 hours following a morning application, not just that day. You do not need 3 days in a row with high ratings for good thinning. **Each day’s rating is for a 3 day period.** Most of the weather influence on sensitivity to a thinner is during the first 3 days after application.

Horizontal lines mark transition levels between sensitivity categories. "Good thinning" for trees with average sensitivity is associated with ratings in the "Increased Sensitivity" range.

Vertical blue dashed line marks estimated McIntosh fruit diameter exceeding 12mm, causing decline in sensitivity below rated value.

Vertical purple dashed line marks estimated McIntosh fruit diameter exceeding 15mm, causing decline in sensitivity substantially below rated value, and rapid decline in efficacy of NAA and Maxcel.

Vertical black dashed line marks estimated McIntosh fruit diameter exceeding 18mm, bringing an end to the thinning window for carbaryl. Ratings for dates beyond the McIntosh 18mm date are for later cultivars that still have fruit smaller than 18mm diameter. Vertical solid orange line marks date when fruit have reduced sensitivity after 2 or more days of temperatures > 75F. This may occur on same day and overlap one of the other vertical bars.
Sanford thinning weather forecast

The long period of cloudy, wet weather is conducive for fruit russetting in sensitive varieties such as McIntosh. Be wary of complex spray mixes on these varieties, and consider leaving out foliar fertilizers. Honeycrisp is less sensitive and could use calcium sprays at this time.

There are fewer options for thinning pears since Sevin is not labeled for pear. Options for pear thinning (NAA, Amid-thin or BA) with regard to rates and timings are similar to what is recommended for apple, and are stated on the product labels. Sevin is not labeled for thinning pear, with reasons for this also stated on the product label. In cases where pears are interplanted with apple, pears sprayed with Sevin may become oddly shaped.

**Stone fruits**

For peach, plum, cherry and apricot, it is time to stop using chlorothalonil (Bravo) since it scars fruit when used after the jacket stage. Switch to a different fungicide for peach scab and brown rot. At Highmoor Farm, fruit size on cherry and plum is highly variable because of the long bloom period. Some varieties of sweet cherry will reach the straw stage soon and begin to ripen, so it is nearly time to think about birds and order netting or flashy, repellent tape.

**Apple Scab**

Primary scab season is over for orchards south of Waterville. The last significant ascospore release and infection period was on Tuesday June 6. With primary scab spore releases done for the year in those locations, scab fungicide strategy can shift to providing protection against secondary spread of scab from any infections that might have started during the previous month. Lesions from the earliest infections are already showing.
In the Monmouth area, the portion of this year’s primary scab infections that have had time to become visible will jump from about 17% to 84% in the next few days. In the Sanford area, it is already over 80% and will reach nearly 100% this weekend. This is the time to walk the orchard looking for scab spots on leaves. It is not rocket science. You just look. If they are there, you will see them. If you find 5 or fewer scab-infested leaves per 100 shoots, then a relaxed intervals of fungicide coverage renewal every 3 weeks will suffice to prevent spread of scab and development of flyspeck and sooty blotch. Until all potential scab lesions have had time to appear, it is prudent to maintain coverage at ca. 14-day or 2-inch rain interval until you know that primary scab control was successful.

If you find more than 15 scab-infested leaves per 100 shoots, then your best bet is two scab fungicide applications 7-10 days apart to stunt production of spores from existing lesions, and protect new growth from new infections. Captan and Syllit are useful for this purpose. Combinations of captan with a DMI, strobilurin, or SDHI fungicide, will help prevent development of incipient infections that have not yet developed to the point of becoming visible lesions. When there is significant scab inoculum present, any of these materials should be combined with captan or another fungicide to forestall resistance. Using these single biochemical mode of action materials alone without a tankmix partner is a recipe for generating a scab population resistant to that material. And captan is the best broad spectrum material for this use.

Unfortunately, the first generation scab lesions can be hard to detect even though present in large enough numbers to cause a rolling problem for the rest of the summer, especially in larger trees. That is why it is best to keep checking for scab on a regular basis until all potential infection periods have had time to show lesions as second-generation lesions. That will not be until around June 22 in the Sanford area, and early July in the Monmouth area.

**Fire Blight**

If blossom blight strikes occurred from the rains following the hot days on May 18 and May 21, those infections would become obvious by June 14. Often we do not see fire blight until it spreads as secondary shoot blight. The first shoot blight strikes could start appearing around June 24. If your orchard has a fire blight history and you had unprotected blossoms during the blossom infection periods, it is not too late to apply Apogee to reduce shoot growth and vulnerability to shoot blight.

The cool weather after May 23 has prevented any infection potential on any remaining late flowers. If you do find blossom or shoot blight, keep streptomycin on hand in case you need quick response time in case of hail damage. The hail that hit some orchards last week was probably too early and too cool to cause significant trauma blight risk.
Insects and Mites

Plum curculio are beginning to make egglaying scars in fruit. Protection against plum curculio moving into the orchard from surrounding woods line will be needed until about June 20-24 in the Sanford and Monmouth areas, respectively. PC activity should increase with warming temperatures on Sunday – Thursday June 11-15. Warm nights are especially favorable for PC egglaying. Plum curculio respray guidelines are posted at http://ag-radar.umext.maine.edu/MEmodel/ME-Monmouth-PCTable.htm and http://ag-radar.umext.maine.edu/MEmodel/ME-Sanford-PCTable.htm

Leafminers have been at zero in 20 orchards monitored by the Maine Extension – Pomological Society Scouting Co-op.

There have been a few leaves with European red mites, but no blocks checked so far have exceeded the Petal Fall to June 15 threshold of 1 mite per leaf, or 30% of middle-aged leaves with living hatched mites present. That threshold rises to 54% of leaves infested, or 2.5 mites per leaf, starting June 15. 1st generation ERM adults are dying off, 2nd generation eggs will hatch into nymphs starting around June 14 in Sanford, and June 20 in Monmouth.

Codling moth egg hatch should begin around June 14 in the Sanford area, and June 18 in Monmouth. The best date for a single spray to control 1st generation codling moth larvae before they chew their way into fruit is application of an insecticide effective against this ubiquitous pest around June 23-27 in Sanford and Monmouth, respectively.

Crop Insurance Survey

The Maine Risk Management and Crop Insurance Education Program is seeking input from farmers about the Federal crop insurance program. This online survey should take 10 minutes to complete and responses will be anonymous. Your input can help the insurance program fit your situation. The survey is at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SKP7HCS

Closing Words

“When someone shows you who they are, believe them the first time.”
- Maya Angelou