

Connecticut Wine Grape Grower Alert

June 12, 2009

We are at the pre-bloom stage in most vineyards with many shoots up to 20 in. long and up to 14 leaves out. The recent wet weather has promoted the development and spread of most of the grape diseases that we expect at this time: black rot, downy mildew, powdery mildew, and Phomopsis cane and leaf spot. Examining vines at several sites during June 10 and 11 revealed few symptoms so far except for Phomopsis which has been creeping up to worrisome levels in a couple of vineyards. Everyone must be doing a good job protecting your vines. Be sure that you keep a tight fungicide spray schedule during this period through bloom (7 days if wet-10 days if dry) and make sure you use materials (probably a tank mix of two) that have excellent efficacy against all 4 diseases. Most grape or small fruit recommendations have a table with this info (e.g., The New England Small Fruit Pest Management Guide, pg.102, Table 48). When we get to bloom we have to watch out for Botrytis Rot, too. If all of these diseases are not kept under control through bloom, you could have big problems later. Last week, powdery mildew spores seemed to be slower than expected to mature. This week's samples, which will be examined over the next few days might be much more mature. Remember that downy mildew can develop explosively in a few days if the inoculum is present, the evening, night and morning temps are moderate, and the leaves are wet. It is a good idea to put up grape berry moth traps, if you have not already.

We are attaching disease risk prediction tables for selected sites in southern New England for June. We will upload more of these to the website periodically, and we will update the degree day table. The disease risk tables present predictions, they are not facts. They show what your risks were over the last few days for the given disease, and according to the weather recorded by the weather station at that particular site. Growers at some distance from those sites should take these as general warnings. The tables tell us what we already know: we should have been covered before all the wet weather started, and we hope there will be a break in the rain to get covered again before all the pesticide gets washed off.

The most recent issue of New England Grape Notes has important info about canopy management and petiole tissue analysis for adjusting your fertilizer programs, among other topics.

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