

Central Florida Fruit Production News

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Blueberry Mites Causing a Problem?



By: Oscar Liburd and Zulaikha Mazlan.

Several mite species have been reported to be important pests of blueberry in Florida. These include the blueberry bud mite *Acalitus vaccinii* Keifer, southern red mite *Oligonychus ilicis* (McGregor) and twospotted spider mite *Tetranychus urticae* Koch. In addition to these species, false spider mites or flat mites *Brevipalpus yothersi* Baker, was recently described infesting southern highbush blueberry in this state.

Twospotted spider mites have been reported to develop resistance against many acaricides in several crops. At present, there are no true miticides that are registered for mite control in blueberry. Horticultural oil and dormant oil can be used in the fall and spring if the temperature is below 80 °F. If blueberry plants have already started to set flowers, the use of oils should be restricted, as flowers are easily damaged from oil sprays. The application of

sulfur and the use of conventional synthetic pyrethroids including Danitol® (Fenpropathrin), Mustang® (Zeta-cypermethrin) and bifenthrin® offer some protection against mites especially those belonging to the family Tetranychidae (southern red mite and twospotted spider mite). Miticidal soaps including M-Pede works well during the warm season. Fenproximate (Portal®) is a miticide that is currently being reviewed by IR4 and EPA for use in highbush blueberries. This can be a lengthy process and no one knows exactly how long it will take before it is legal to use Portal® in highbush blueberries.

[Full article and more photos.](#)

Classes of Interest for 2018:

[Produce Safety Alliance Food Safety \(FSMA\) Classes for 2018](#) (the one in Apopka is May 2)

[Pesticide Applicator Classes for 2018](#)

February 28, 2018. **New Technology for Commercial Crop Production.** CEU Opportunity for FDACS: 2.0 for each of Ag Row Crop, Ag Tree Crop, 487 Core, and/or 6 CCA CEUs: NM 1.0, PM 2.0, CM 3.0. t the Lake County Extension Office. Registration link to follow.

Is a Conservation Easement Right for Your Land? Free landowner workshop. January 26, 2018 9:00am-2:00pm. Extension Services in Osceola Heritage Park, 1921 Kissimmee Valley Ln., Kissimmee, FL. [Registration.](#)

Operation Cleansweep is Back! Dispose of canceled, suspended, and unusable pesticides (CSUP). [Details.](#)

Want to check out some of the **new citrus varieties**? New Varieties Development and Management Corp. (NVDMC) Citrus Variety Display dates are: Jan. 9th, IRREC, Ft. Pierce at 10:00 a.m. and Feb. 20th, CREC, Lake Alfred at 10:00 a.m.

Blueberry Fertilizer and Irrigation Management Field Day. February 21, 9 a.m. Spring Valley Farm, Umatilla. [Register.](#)

More classes to come as I schedule for 2018!

Research Update

[CUPS – An insecticide-Free Way to Grow Citrus in the Face of Greening -](#)

Research on growing grapefruit under insect-excluding screen enclosures shows the trees grow bigger and better under cover.

[Reducing Soil pH in a Blueberry Field](#) - Ever wondered if you should incorporate sulfur into the soil preplant or just use acidified water? Research shows preplant is a lot easier, but acidified water works on established plantings with a pH problem.

[Chilling Hours or Chilling Portions?](#) - Chilling hours are how we usually measure the amount of cold a plant experiences to overcome dormancy. In our variable climate chilling portions may be a better way to measure this because it accounts for warming and chilling.



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