

# Editorial

## Cornell Supports the Fruit Industry Through this Challenging Year

Unusual spring weather has led to uncertain times for our New York fruit growing community this season. As we write this, tree fruit farmers throughout the state are waiting to assess the full extent of the damage done by several nights of sub-freezing temperatures in late April, following an aberrantly warm March which spurred many apple, cherry, grape and other crops to bloom early. While the full extent of the injury to our fruit industry will only become clear over the next few weeks, the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CAL S) and Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) are following developments very closely and are committed to partnering with New York growers and industry to meet the challenges of this difficult time.

Cornell faculty and educators, together with outside consultants, are on the ground to assist with assessing the situation and offer advice on issues such as pest control and thinning. CCE specialists will be conducting workshops on crop insurance, H-2A worker status, and other labor issues. The industry can rely upon us to be there to help connect growers to the disaster response services of FarmNet and communicate with our legislators about what is happening in the field. We will also be surveying fruit growers throughout the state on the various methodologies employed to mitigate damage and their effectiveness. From spraying early buds with micronutrients to applying protectants to keep vines from blooming too early, our research trials based on grower's experience and feedback will help New York farmers better protect the state's vital fruit industry.

Indeed, research-based solutions are vital for responding to urgent situations. CAL S and CCE programs, like those on opti-

mized thinning and tracking of streptomycin-resistant fire blight, demonstrate a continued commitment to enriching the livelihoods of New York growers and stakeholders, while providing invaluable information in times such as these. Our capacity to respond to such crises is only possible through the continued support of these programs from our commodity group partners: the New York Farm Viability Institute and the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets.

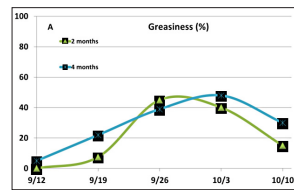
While these measures may serve to lessen the hardships of this season, we acknowledge the realities of the situation and their tangible impacts on the growers of this region. There is much about this season that is still unknown; while there has been severe injury to the tree fruit industry, there are also hopeful signs that late apple blooms may provide some production and news that certain grape varieties and growing regions remain untouched. What we do know, however, is that climate change leads to extreme weather, like that experienced this spring, which may increase in frequency and pose greater challenges for agriculture. New York fruit growers can be confident that lessons learned now, and throughout the years, serve to deepen our collective knowledge and reserves. Working together, we will develop resilient responses and ensure a sustainable, successful future for our community.

Kathryn J. Boor, PhD  
The Ronald P. Lynch Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

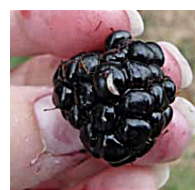
Helene R. Dillard, PhD  
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3



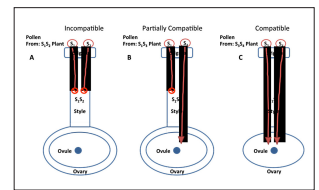
11



17



21



25

## Contents

### 3 A Two-Year Educational Experience with the Next Generation of Fruit Growers and Newcomers in NY State

Mario Miranda Sazo, Alison DeMarree, Mike Fargione, Deborah Breth, Craig Kahlke, and Kevin Iungerman

### 11 Harvest Indices and Storage of NY-1 and NY-2: Observations from the 2011 Harvest Season

Susan K. Brown, Kevin E. Maloney, Jackie F. Nock and Chris B. Watkins

### 17 This "Ninja" Fruit Fly Cuts into Perfect Fruits – Spotted Wing Drosophila

Juliet Carroll, Faruque Zama, Greg Loeb

### 21 Novel Barriers for Dogwood Borer Management

Art Agnello, Dave Kain, Jeff Gardner, and Mike Hoffmann

### 25 A Grower's Guide to Self and Cross-Incompatibility in Apple

Ben Orcheski and Susan Brown

**COVER:** Six-year-old high-density Rainer (yellow) and Lapins (red) sweet cherries on Gisela 5 rootstock trained to a Modified Spanish Bush system at Geneva under a high tunnel for rain crack prevention.

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