

MICHIGAN PEACH SPONSOR NEWS - Fall/Winter - 2005

Produced by the Michigan Peach Sponsors-a non-profit organization for research and promotion of peaches
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UPCOMING PEACH MEETINGS

Half-day Peach Session in SW Michigan Horticulture Days on February 8 & 9th, 2006

The annual SW Hort Days, held February 8 & 9th, 2006 will feature a half day session devoted to peaches on the afternoon of Wednesday the 8th. Speakers in the peach session will be Philip Neary, Director of Operations for Sunny Valley International of New Jersey, Dr. Paolo Sabbatini, visiting scientist from Italy, and Dr. Larry Gut, tree fruit entomologist for Michigan State University. The SW Hort Days are held in the Mendel Center of Lake Michigan College, Benton Harbor, MI. The college is 1/2 mile east of I-94 exit 30, on Napier Avenue. Call Berrien County Extension at 269-944-4126 for more details.

Early Spring Annual Michigan Peach Sponsor Update Session Tuesday March 7th, 2006

An early season peach update session will be held March 7th, from 8:30 AM to 12 noon at the Southwest Michigan Research and Extension Center, 1791 Hillandale Rd, Benton Harbor, MI. Topics covered at this half-day session will include crop prospects for 2006, pest management, new peach variety profiles, peach marketing prospects. A short business meeting including election of Michigan Peach Sponsor board members will be held. Contact Mich State University Fruit Agent Bill Shane at 269-944-1477 x 205 for more details.

2006 Mid-Atlantic Fruit & Vegetable Convention

Hershey, Pennsylvania will host the 2006 Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention on January 31, 2006 through February 2, 2006. Peaches are discussed during one and one-half days of the conference. For hotel reservations, attendees should call the Hersey Lodge & Convention Center directly at (717) 533-3311. The Hershey conference is one of the best meetings for peaches for the northern US growing climate.

Neglected Orchards Removal Funds Available

A new feature has been added to the EQIP program of the MDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for the 2006 season of benefit for peach and other tree fruit growers. Growers can now apply for: \$250 per acre for orchard removal to remove a neglected orchard that is within one mile of active orchards. The neglected orchard must have the same pest complex and have been abandoned within the last 3 years. At the same time the grower can apply for conservation vegetation cover funds for soil stabilization, and general pest management at \$60 per acre for the ongoing orchard acreage.

Contact Mike Brewer, MSU IPM Coordinator, for more information (517-353-5143) or your local county NRCS district conservationist.

Peterson Farms—Current and Future Plans for Processing

Peaches — Leo Steffens, Peterson Farms, Shelby, MI phone 231-861-6333 Ext. 229

Peterson Farms is one of the largest processors and marketers of IQF frozen peaches, tart cherries, apples and blueberries in the United States. They also process black sweet cherries, asparagus and a limited amount of plums. Many of the larger customers that purchase peaches also purchase from PFI other frozen fruits such as apples, cherries, and blueberries. Peterson Farms is the only frozen cling peach processor in the Midwest and Eastern U.S.



There is reason for optimism about growing processing peaches in Michigan. With the high cost of fuel, Michigan has a freight advantage over California processors due to Michigan's close proximity to population centers. Some of the larger global customers are beginning to source imported IQF peaches from Chile and China as a minor secondary source in an effort to guarantee supply. However, U.S. customers prefer to deal with U.S. suppliers because of convenience and accountability.

We are seeing increased consumption of retail peaches in the U.S. due to increased population, greater emphasis on "fresh fruit" being healthy, and better marketing by retail packers. Many of Peterson's customers are revising specifications on their orders to include either freestones or clings.

According to the California Canning Peach Association, California pulled 30,200 bearing acres of processing peaches in 2005 with another 4,000 acres expected to be removed leaving a 2006 estimated bearing acres of 26,800. With the current strong market for almonds, it is expected that much of this acreage will be planted to almonds, which can be mechanically harvested.

Global competition is on our radar. Imports of canned freestone peaches into the U.S. have increased. Spain, Greece, and China are planting peaches primarily for the canned market. In spite of this, there is still room for increased acreage of processing peaches in Michigan.

Processing peaches planted in Michigan, according to the Michigan Agriculture Statistics Service are:

Ark-9 (Goldnine)	890 acres
Baby Gold	1,040 acres
Vinegold	50 acres estimated
Other varieties	45 acres estimated

Comments on current and future peach varieties for Peterson Farms

Vulcan: I do not recommend planting this peach for Peterson Farms, Inc, because it is too early and will conflict with our tart cherry harvest and processing

Vinegold: We initially had concerns about this peach because of the point on the pit. To date we have had no issues with processing this variety. The variety bears very well. It will need to be thinned. Predicted harvest date for Oceana county is Aug. 10.

Virgil: Another very good bearing peach. Predicted harvest date for Oceana county is Aug 13.

Catherina: Excellent flavor, and large peach. It does not bear as heavily as the Vineland series of peaches (Vinegold, Virgil and Venture). Predicted harvest date for SW MI Aug. 15 –18, predicted harvest date for Oceana county is Aug. 25

Goldnine (Ark-9): In the first few years of processing we thought this was a fabulous peach. Its positive characteristics are excellent size and bears well. Negative characteristic is split pits. Normal harvest date for Oceana county is Aug. 25.

Babygold 5: Positive Characteristics: Excellent flavor, bears well, and can achieve good size if thinned properly. Negative characteristics: susceptible to bacterial spot. Normal harvest date for SW MI is Aug 28 and for Oceana county Sept. 5.

Venture: Growers in Ontario are planting this peach as a replacement for Babygold 5. Bears very well. Predicted harvest date for SW MI is Aug. 30 and Oceana county is Sept. 6.

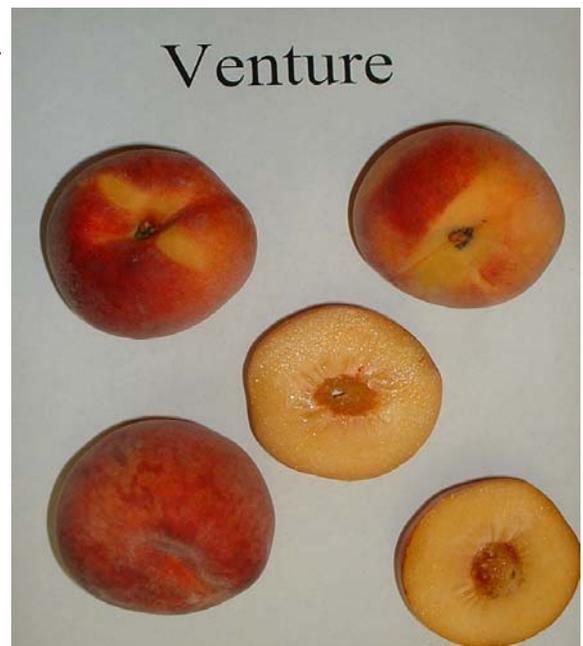
Babygold 8: Very similar to BG5, but not quite as sensitive to bacterial spot. Normal harvest date for SW MI is Sept. 5 and for Oceana county Sept. 13.

In the past and to date Peterson Farms has always purchased peaches on a verbal agreement. Our price for 2004 and 2005 were:

2 ¾ inch and up	\$21.00/cwt
2 ½ inch-2 ¾ inch	\$18.00/cwt
2 3/8 inch-2 ½ inch	\$9.00/cwt
Split pits	\$9.00/cwt
No payment for undersize	

In summary, the current and future market situation looks strong for processing peaches. So far, global competition is a small factor. Peterson Farms, Inc plans to continue its growth in peaches at a rate of about 5-10% each year. However, before you order trees for planting, make sure you have a home for your product.

Peterson Farms Cooperative, Inc.					
2005 Average Grades for Michigan Peach Deliveries					
				2 3/8" to	
Variety	2 3/4" & Up	2 1/2" to 2 3/4"	2 1/2" & Split Pits	Undersize & Culls	
Ark-9	58%	26%	13%	3%	
Baby Gold 5&7	50%	32%	9%	9%	
Catherina	53%	36%	6%	5%	
Venture	75%	24%	0%	1%	
Vinegold	48%	38%	10%	4%	
Virgil	59%	34%	6%	1%	



2004 Michigan Survey Finds Bacterial Spot Resistance is Common in Stone Fruit Orchards

Michigan State University plant pathologist George Sundin sampled Michigan peach, nectarine, apricot and plum orchards in 2004 and found strains of bacterial spot bacteria (*Xanthomonas campestris* pv. *pruni*) with significant copper resistance. Bacterial spot causes leaf and fruit spotting that reduces tree vigor, disfigures fruit, and provides entry points for other pathogens.



Bacterial spot symptoms on peach fruit

Copper is routinely used in commercial peach and nectarine orchards in early season for peach leaf curl control and bacterial spot suppression.

Orchard	Host	No. of Xcp strains	No. of copper-res Xcp strains	% of copper-res Xcp strains
1-12	peach	120	77	64
13	apricot	10	3	30
14	nectarine	10	7	70
15	plum	150	6	60
Total			93	62

In Dr. Sundin's tests, bacterial collected from the Michigan sites were tested in the laboratory with 200 ppm concentration copper. Bacteria able to tolerate this level are typically associated with reduced levels of disease control with Xanthomonad bacteria in other crops. Approximately 62% of the strains tested by Dr. Sundin were classified as resistant to copper. Based on the large percentage of resistant isolates, he would expect to see reduced effectiveness of copper compounds in Michigan.



Bacterial spot causes spotting, yellowing and early defoliation of peaches

Dr. Sundin used polymerase chain reaction (PCR) fingerprinting technique for genetic comparison of these bacterial isolates and saw only limited diversity, actually only two main patterns of strains. These two major strains were widely distributed in Michigan which suggests that individual strain types do not have any specificity for host type (peach, plum, or apricot) or by host genotype (i.e. bacterial spot resistant or susceptible plant varieties).

Copper is considered only fair for control of bacterial spot in Michigan, which may in part be due to the relatively high level of resistance present. It is a relatively low cost control for peach leaf curl. In 2006, Dr. Sundin plans to examine the role of copper resistance in reduced control with copper in field studies and also possibly look at novel experimental bacterial controls for efficacy.

Ideas for Direct Marketing of Peaches—*The following are excerpts of Grower Panel March 2005, Great Lakes Peach Conference, SW Michigan Research and Extension Center. The topic was direct marketing of peaches and what three longtime growers & farm marketers have learned over the years.*

Brian Cosgrove, Cosgrove Orchards, Fennville, MI. “Some things we have learned from the farmers market—if a lady wants Red Haven peaches, she wants Red Haven. Younger customers tend to be open to new things and I am sure that some of the names of these new varieties are done for that reason... In farmers markets we sell 50% of our fruit in half bushels and 50% in 1/2 and 1/4 pecks. The 1/2 pecks and 1/4 pecks we put into paper bags. It takes extra time to take them out the containers and put them into the bags but we get positive feedback and an advantage is that our name, phone, and e-mail are on it. A strategy we are looking at for next year is a 1/2 bushel size container with fruit prebagged in paper bags in it of maybe 1/4 peck size”.

The limiting factor in selling through farmers markets is time, how much time I have to go to other markets. Labor is another limiting factor. I try to avoid hiring much labor and make do with myself and my daughter, and my father.

Ed Bauschke, Heritage Farms, Benton Harbor, MI. “In the past, price may have been a main motivating factor in Chicago farmers markets, but today it is way down the list for the customer. Customers at the farmers market are looking #1 for freshness—the concept of freshness—that is why they go out of their way to go to a farmers market because they can always go to Jewels for the same type of fruit. The appearance may actually be less in the farm market, but the perception is that the produce is fresher and will taste better. “

“Peaches are the #1 item where you can differentiate yourself in these farm markets from the store in terms of the quality and taste, but not necessarily by appearance. When the customer takes home peaches from the store it may be hard as a rock. When they try to ripen it, it rots, it tastes dry, and is tasteless. “

“Price in terms of loyalty of the farm market customer is not a big issue. I have found changing the price frustrates my customers and creates animosity more than anything. The retailer learns that you don’t increase consumption that much by changing the price. This is true on a pound basis or in small containers—with 1/2 bushel quantities you can increase consumption by changing the price. It is best to continue to offer a price that is fair. ... About our setup—we set out the product by hand on tables with indoor-outdoor carpet. We use electronic scales so there is no quibbling over the price. The customer chooses

<p align="center">** GOLD MEMBERS OF THE ** ** MICHIGAN PEACH SPONSORS **</p>	<p align="center">MOSER FRUIT TREE SALES, INC 5329 Defield Rd, Coloma, MI 49038 Matt 269-468-4356</p>
<p align="center">PETERSON FARMS, INC 3104 Baseline Rd, Shelby, MI 49455 231-861-6333</p>	<p align="center">WILLMENG FARMS 7515 N Branch Road Watervliet, MI 49098</p>
<p align="center">GRANDVIEW ORCHARDS 7901 Territorial Road Watervliet, MI 49098</p>	<p align="center">FRUIT ACRES ORCHARDS & FARM MARKET 2559 Friday Road Coloma, MI 49038</p>
<p align="center">A W OVERHISER ORCHARDS 6317 107th Ave South Haven, MI 49090</p>	<p align="center">SUMMIT SALES 55826 60th Avenue, Lawrence, MI 49064 269-674-8866</p>

their own fruit. Giving samples is key. You can give away one or two ripe fruit with a sale that makes some customers very happy. I have been at \$1.40 per pound the last 5 or 6 years. I probably sell 50% of my peaches as half bushels and am up to \$18 per half bushel plus a \$1.00 to \$1.75 basket deposit which becomes a way to get the customer back for later purchases.

The limitation for expanding my direct marketing business is not so much the selling but the trip south to Chicago, the traffic going back and forth. Part of the issue is how hard do I want to push it because there is a lot of wear and tear on me, working both ends of the business. It will never be a big volume deal, it is a select market. You never will hit a home run, but you'll hit a lot of singles, you never are going to strike out."

Linda Koenigshoff, K & K Farms, Coloma, MI. "About Chicago farmer markets, I have build a customer base over the years, but you do get new customers every week. So how you display your fruit makes a difference. Put the red side of the peach up. Many people in Chicago think a yellow peach is not ripe. They will take it home and mistakenly wait for it to turn red. So yellow peaches don't work for us. On the other hand, I had a peach variety that was dark red and people wouldn't buy it because they thought it was overripe.

Peach Nutritional Information		
Serving Size: 2 medium peaches (174 g), about 1 cup)		
		% Daily Value*
Calories	70	
Total Fat	0 grams	0 %
Saturated fat	0 grams	0 %
Cholesterol	0 grams	0 %
Sodium	0 milligrams	0 %
Potassium	331 milligrams	10 %
Total carbohydrate	19 grams	6 %
Dietary fiber	1 gram	4 %
Sugars	16 gram	
Protein	1 gram	
Vitamin A		20%
Vitamin C		20%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs

People ask me if they are freestone peaches. Many people have no clue what that means. I base my price per quart approximately what others are selling per pound with a slight break for volume. Also, everyone asks if it is a Red Haven. Quite often they will buy more peaches if it is Red Haven or it is Red Haven season and they think it is Red Haven. They know the name but they really don't know the peach.

On size—they don't want a real tiny one and they don't want a real big one either. They want a size they can sit down and eat the whole thing or send in their kids lunch.

Giving samples is very important, especially if I have a week when I have a yellow peach. We give a slice to anyone who wants one, and it helps sales because so many have purchased peaches in the grocery store and they can't get it to taste good.

The customer that comes to the farmers market want to meet the farmer. If you send out too many different trucks, then you lose control of the quality of the fruit, pricing and how it is handled.

If we can make people aware of health benefits of peaches this will help sales. The customer is looking for the healthy benefits.

Suggested Spray Schedule for Maximum Resistance Management of Brown Rot

Phil Brannen

University of Georgia

Source: “The Georgia Peach”, The University of Georgia.

Online: www.griffin.peachnet.edu/caes/gapeach/features.html.

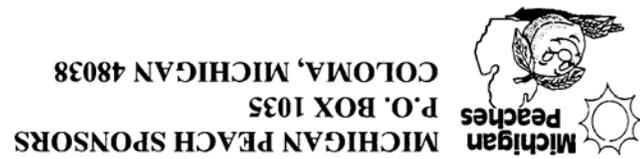
As mentioned in the last newsletter (“The Georgia Peach”), DMI-resistant (sterol-biosynthesis inhibitor fungicide) *Monilinia fruticola*, causal agent of brown rot, strains have been detected in Georgia. The geographic extent of resistance is not known, but it is suggested that producers take a conservative approach relative to resistance management.

With only two classes of chemistry available for control of preharvest brown rot, the DMIs and strobilurins, we have a critical need to extend the use of these fungicides as long as possible. If utilized as indicated, the following chart allows for good control of brown rot, while optimizing resistance management with the current arsenal of fungicides at our disposal. It is suggested that the entire industry may want to consider such a management program. Since resistant strains have been found in Georgia, there is no reason to assume that other locations will not observe resistance as well.

Note from Bill Shane, Michigan State University: Brown rot resistant to DMI type fungicides (Orbit, Elite, or Indar) have not yet been reported in Michigan. However, the article by Phil Brannen is good advice for Michigan growers to help delay its inevitable appearance.

Phenology (Growth Stage)	Dry periods	Wet periods
10% Bloom	—	—
50-75% Bloom	Bravo	Bravo
Petal fall/Shuck Split	Bravo	Bravo
Cover Spray	Sulfur	Captan
1st Preharvest Sprays	Captan	Topsin ^a + Captan
2nd Preharvest Spray	Pristine	Pristine
3rd Preharvest Spray	Orbit or Elite or Indar	Orbit or Elite or Indar

^aDo not use more than one application per year of Topsin M, since resistance develops rapidly with this type of fungicide



Inside:

- **Peach meetings in early 2006**
- **Hints for direct marketing of peaches**
- **Processing peaches at Peterson Farms, Inc**
- **Bacterial spot and copper resistance**