New Hampshire State Report – 2024

Widespread weather events in 2023 caused the greatest crop losses in decades.

UNHCE met with each U.S. senator and congressional representative directly or with staffers, as well as Governor Sununu, to provide updates and educate them about the impacts and need for relief funding. Senator Jeanne Shaheen brought information we provided her directly to the senate floor while advocating for federal disaster relief for NH farmers. As a result of our efforts, the Governor of New Hampshire allocated $8 million in crop relief funding for impacted farms.

Farmers report that his funding enabled them to recover losses without taking on substantial new loans, pay for supplies needed for the 2024 season, pay for labor, and bring remaining debt from the prior year current to start 2024 with a clean slate.

Approximately $4.6 million was awarded to 54 farms statewide directly to help with recovery from crops loss. The remaining $3.4 million has been allocated to 15 different projects designed to enhance agricultural viability in New Hampshire.

Winter was quite mild with no significant bud damage. The minimum temperature recorded by the NEWA station in Concord, NH was 6F. Peaches even came through without bud damage, resulting in a good crop statewide.

Spring began with green tip during the second week of April. Bloom ranged from the second to third week in May.

Summer certainly brought with it a few stretches of hot, muggy weather. Our highest temp recorded in Concord was 91.4 on 7/15/24.

Fall has been dry with lots of sunshine. Great for u-pick operations, but tough from a soil moisture content perspective. While many growers used ReTain, complaints of excessive fruit drop were more common that one would like.

Diseases

Apple scab was a challenge for some this season. Some theorize that the reduced management last year due to the crop loss allowed the disease to build up in some orchards, resulting in high PAD counts as spring ensued. We certainly had weather conditions conducive to primary infection, with frequent periods of rainfall, heavy dew and damp conditions. NEWA models confused some growers trying to determine when infection periods stopped and started.

Fireblight

With bloom peaking during the second week of May, we had significant infection risk though the end of May. More growers continue to adopt the use of Actigard and Apogee, with strep still the primary management tool during high-risk periods through bloom. Interest in biologicals and other alternatives to strep is growing.

Powdery mildew

This was more prevalent this year than it has been in recent years. Perhaps this also has to do with a reduced management program in 2023. Our growers tend to take a fairly relaxed approach to PM with retail sales at farmstands and u-pick operations as the primary market.

Bitter Rot

We saw more of this in NH than we have in the past. It seems there is some confusion about this disease and bitter pit. Education is needed here for next year.

Marssonina

Growers are still becoming familiar with this disease. We did confirm a little of this in NH during 2024, but it remains a minor issue in managed orchards.

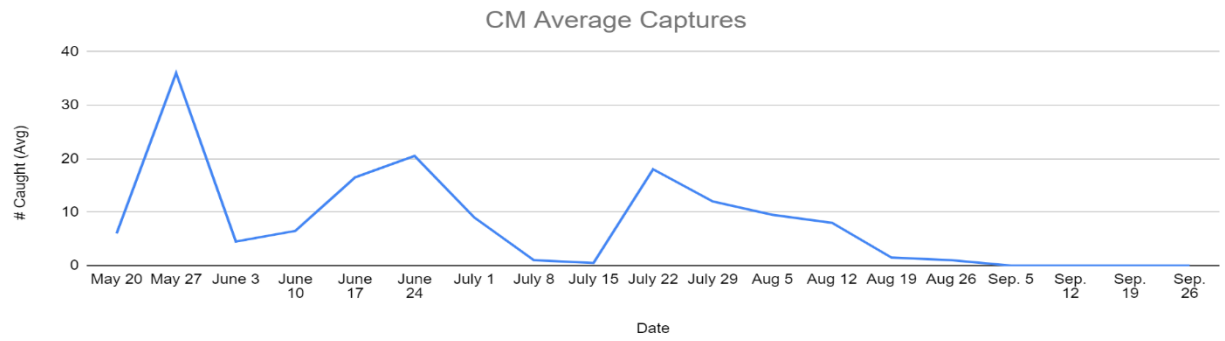
Peach leaf curl

Where fungicides were omitted, this was a major issues for us in 2024. Growers are encouraged to make both spring and fall application when possible with either copper or chlorothalonil.

Insects

Plum curculio caused only minimal damage this year. Oviposition scars were first observed in pears during the week of 5/14/24.

Codling moth first captures were recorded on 5/20/24. Many growers are using NEWA models to best time insecticide applications.

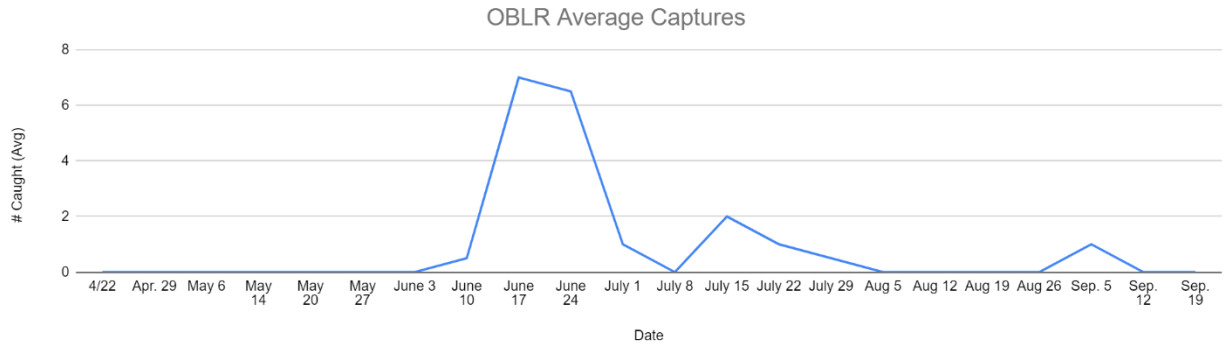


Scale – Where growers have relaxed their oil application in recent years, scale insects, including oystershell scale have made a comeback.

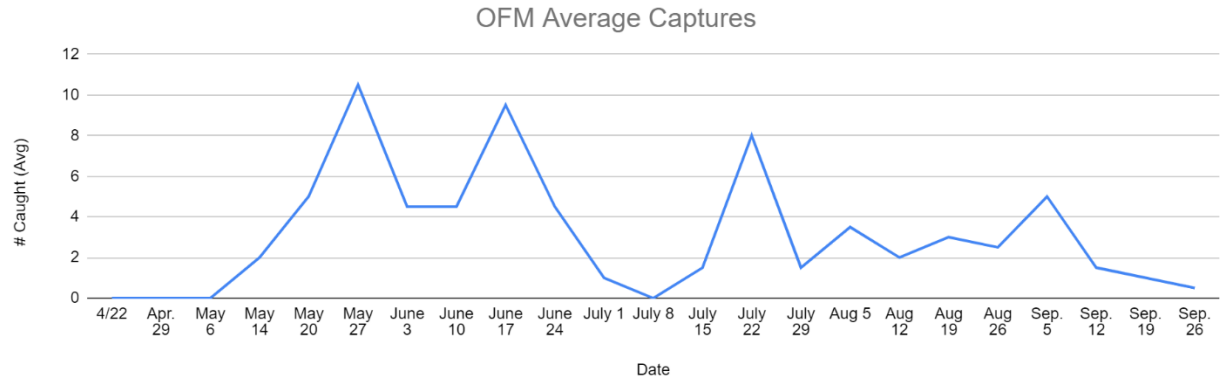
WAA

This continues to be a minor pest in most locations. We continue to monitor for populations and educate growers about the potential damage caused by this insect.

OBLR



OFM



AMF

Apple maggot fly was essentially a no-show for us this year. We caught very few flies throughout our trapping season from June through September.

Stinkbugs

Green stinkbugs and BMSB were both prevalent in NH this year, particularly in peaches. In apples, most retail marketers still view BMSB as a minor pest.

New Hampshire offers a suite of **IPM practices supported by NRCS**. A list of those is below.

NRCS IPM Practices (595)

- Purchasing Weather Stations and Using the NEWA Network

- Sprayer Calibration

- Scouting, Trapping, and Monitoring

- Sanitation to Disrupt Pest Cycles (Apple Scab and Fire Blight)

Supporting Practices

- Pollinator and Beneficial Insect Habitat (420)
- Mulching (484)
- Annual Insectary Strips (Cover Crop - 340)