

Vermont Vegetable and Berry News – July 31, 2015
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TIME FOR SMALL FRUIT LEAF ANALYSIS

Leaf analysis (also called tissue analysis or foliar analysis) is an excellent means of monitoring perennial plant nutrient levels. While soil tests reveal the quantity of available nutrients in the soil, leaf analysis shows exactly what the plant is

EVOLVING VEGETABLE WASH WATER RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations related to produce safety continue to change with new research, regulations,

USING TRICHOGRAMMA WASPS FOR CONTROL OF ECB IN PEPPERS

(From UMass Extension vegetable notes, <https://ag.umass.edu/vegetable/newsletters>)

Sweet corn is not the only crop where ECB can be controlled with the parasitic wasp, *Trichogramma ostriniae*. Most of what you have read about using *Trichogramma* in corn applies to peppers, with a few important differences. Peppers are susceptible to the second generation of ECB, because that is when the plants are fruiting. ECB will invade fruits that are > ½ inch across. *Trichogramma* attacks only the egg stage, so timing is critical.

We recommend that you begin releases the week that flight begins and continue weekly releases for a total of 4 weeks. Release 90,000 to 120,000 wasps per acre and spread the cards out throughout your pepper block. Higher rates are needed in peppers compared to sweet corn because the tolerance for damage is virtually zero and ECB larvae attack the fruit directly. Four releases are needed because the egg laying period for the second generation is longer than for the first generation of ECB. Fortunately, peppers are also a higher value crop and worth the extra cost. After four releases, *Trichogramma* will have reproduced in the field and biocontrol should continue. Wasps can be ordered from IPM Laboratories, at www.ipmlabs.com or by phone, 315-497-2063.

LATE SUMMER LEGUME COVER CROPS FOR OVERWINTERING

If the soil is dry, clover will have a better chance of establishing because it needs less moisture than the large-seeded hairy vetch. Clover is also preferred if soil compaction is a problem. Neither cover crop does well on compacted soil, but hairy vetch is more sensitive to the resulting waterlogging.

Hairy vetch requires a small-grain nurse crop to reliably overwinter, and nurse crops are valuable for medium red clover as well. The nurse crop helps keep down weeds during the legumes' slow establishment, reduces winter-kill, and provides physical support to reduce matting under the snow and during spring growth. The nurse crop should be sown at a low rate (approx 40 lb/ac). Wheat overwinters to provide support in the spring, especially for hairy vetch. It is likely the best choice for most situations. Oats can be used for early spring planting, as they die during the winter, allowing faster breakdown for earlier vegetable seeding. Rye is the classic nurse crop with vetch, but can be too vigorous for vegetable production.

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