

# Scouting and Thresholds for Blackberry Pests and Diseases

This field guide is intended to be used as a tool to aid in sampling and decision-making for managing key insect and disease pests in blackberry fields. It compiles information from numerous written sources, practical pest scouting experience of growers and information gathered from a consensus meeting of growers and industry representatives.

The guide is organized based on crop stage and pest development because this is the way the grower or scout encounters blackberry pests and decides how to manage them.

The crop stages are divided into six periods:

- Pre-Bloom (March – April)
- Bloom (May)
- Pre-Harvest (June)
- Harvest (July – August)
- Post-Harvest (September – October)

Pest monitoring guidelines are provided for each pest, as well as thresholds and management tools when they are applicable. Monitoring guidelines relate to the scouting record sheets which are available on the Blackberry IPM Manual Web site through WSU Whatcom County Extension.

Regular field scouting is an important component of any IPM program. By performing some of the basic scouting and record-keeping procedures outlined in this manual, growers can be more informed and involved in pest management decision-making.

Regular systematic scouting and recordkeeping is the fundamental component of Integrated Pest Management. The scouting season typically begins in March prior to the onset of bloom with five to six trips during pre-bloom and bloom, two to three trips during pre-harvest, and two to three trips during harvest and post-harvest. Eight to ten well-timed trips through the field for the entire season are usually enough to provide valuable information on which to base decisions. Scouting and recordkeeping takes about an hour for each field visit. This represents a total, season-long investment of eight to ten hours per field.

Fields should be checked on approximate two week intervals from March through June prior to the onset of harvest. Sampling during harvest is difficult due to time constraints but careful observations of insects that may be present on the harvesting belt is a form of scouting as well. Fields should be checked on approximate two week intervals starting immediately after harvest and into early October.

*Introduction continued on back page...*

For more information on Blackberry IPM in the Pacific Northwest, see the Blackberry IPM Manual online at:  
<http://whatcom.wsu.edu/ipm/manual/black>

### General Guidelines for Scouting in Blackberry Fields

Visit three to five sites in each block (field or portion) depending on block size. Sites should be distributed throughout the block and effort should be made to return to those approximate areas for each visit.

At each site, visit 10 to 20 hills spaced 3-5 hills apart and on both sides of the row. At each plant, follow the monitoring guidelines. Scouting should occur during regularly planned scouting trips as well as during general trips to the field.

### Blackberry Rust

- Defoliating disease found on evergreen blackberries
- Conduct a visual search at each site for symptoms associated with blackberry rust and rate infection level on a scale of 0-3.
- During dormancy, scout field for overwintering black pustules residing on leaves attached to canes or trapped in cane bundles.
- As buds begin to develop, begin looking for new infections occurring as purplish spots on the upper leaf surface.

#### Management:

- Cultural tactics (cultivating to cover fallen debris) and dormant season lime sulfur can reduce initial inoculum sources.
- Chemical tactics focus on protection of young, healthy plant tissues and should begin at bud break if rust is a problem in your field.



### Cane Botrytis

- The pathogen overwinters as minute, black, fungal bodies (sclerotia) on bleached canes or as mycelium in leaves and mummified berries.
- In early spring, begin inspecting for overwintering black fungal bodies on canes and rate infection level on a scale of 0-3.

#### Management:

- Maintain a narrow row by burning back early primocanes and controlling weeds. Promote air circulation and proper drying of plant tissue through pruning and trellising to open plant canopy.

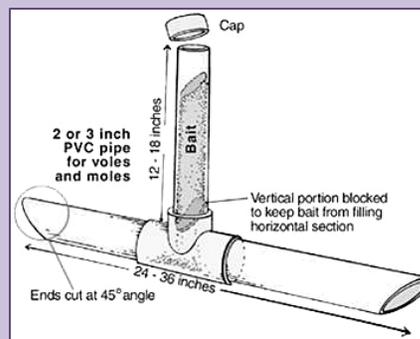


### Voles

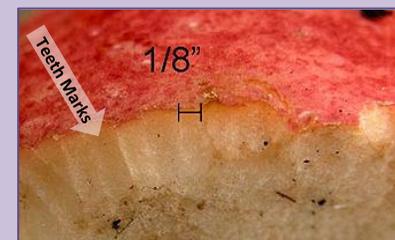
- Spring monitoring is done to assess winter mortality and new populations.
- Set-up monitoring stations: cover runway or tunnel entrance with a shelter made of roofing shingle or PVC piping (4-8 stations per acre).
- Place apple wedge bait under shelter; check apple bait daily for 2-3 days for feeding damage.
- Record percentage of stations positive for feeding damage.
- Monitor again 2-3 weeks after treatment to determine efficacy.

#### Management:

- Treatment threshold: 40% positive from monitoring station.
- Remove debris piles, regularly mow field margins, keep large weeds under control
- Pelletized baits can be broadcast, but degrade quickly.
- Bait stations can be made by making a "T" out of 2-3 inch PVC pipe filled with bait.



For further details:  
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### Beating Tray Sampling Method:

Use beating tray to *survey the canopy* for several insect pests that can directly damage fruit or may pose problems as harvest contaminants as well as for beneficial insects. At each site, take ten tray *samples and record* the total number of each pest and beneficial insect dislodged from foliage. Hold tray one foot below trellis wire within canopy and shake foliage by grasping wire and shaking, or striking top wire three times with rubber sprayer hose to dislodge insects. Alternate samples between rows and check about every ten feet down the row.

### Botrytis Fruit Rot and Cane Botrytis

- Disease develops when conditions are warm and moist, or when temperatures are cooler and the foliage remains wet for a long period.
- Spores can infect leaves, resulting in primocane infections through petioles, and flowers.
- Infected flowers turn brown and shrivel when dry conditions exist. Under moist conditions, grey tufts of fungus can be seen on blighted blossoms.
- Inspect bloom, leaves and canes during wet conditions and/or in fields containing heavy foliage for disease development and rate infection level on a scale of 0-3.

#### Management:

- If using overhead irrigation, adjust watering schedule to prevent plants from being wet for extended periods of time.
- If chemical treatment is required, apply fungicides as a protectant spray at 7-14 day intervals from early bloom up to harvest.



### Voles

- Continue monitoring using monitoring stations with apple baits.
- Check apple bait daily for 2-3 days for feeding damage.
- Record percentage of stations positive for feeding damage.
- Monitor again 2-3 weeks after treatment to determine efficacy.

#### Management:

- Treatment threshold: 40% positive from monitoring station.
- Remove debris piles, regularly mow field margins, keep large weeds under control.



### Black Vine Weevils

- Expect to start seeing adult BVW in beating tray samples in late May with numbers increasing into June.
- Record the amount of weevils found on the beating tray.

#### Management:

- Fields can rapidly become infested in a short time, controls should be applied to even lightly infested fields to prevent an increase in infestation.

#### Threshold:

- A pre-harvest spray is advisable if beating tray sampling results in 1-2 weevils per ten samples.





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### Harvest Contaminants

- Continue beating tray samples to monitor weevils and miscellaneous harvest contaminants.
- The best time to use a beating tray is early in the morning before weevils move down from the canopy, or on cool cloudy days.

### Black Vine Weevils

- Black Vine weevil counts increase in mid to late June.
- Most of the feeding damage from BVW is in the center of the canopy around the wire.
- Take extra samples near field borders, particularly if near a woodlot or a older strawberry field.
- Record # of weevils collected per site from beating tray.

#### Threshold:

- Typically 1-2 weevils/ 10 tray samples indicates a pre-harvest spray is needed. Harvest contaminant thresholds will vary according to end product usage and processor. Scout field soon after treatment to verify effectiveness.



### Strawberry Crown Moth

- Place pheromone traps in the field by early June and check weekly to monitor for emergence. Record number of adults trapped.
- Hang traps in the field on the lower wire of the trellis, as SCM are low fliers.



### Orange Tortrix (OT)

#### Monitoring OT larvae

- Examine a maximum of 5 shoot tips per hill for presence of caterpillars.
- Record number of infested hills for each site.



#### OT Pheromone Traps

- Continue checking traps weekly by removing, counting, and recording the number of OT moths.

#### Threshold:

- Chemical treatment may be necessary if 10% or more hills are infested.

### Dryberry Mite

- Mites can be found feeding on leaves and fruit.
- Watch for affected drupelets that become red, dry and die. Symptoms are similar to sun scalded damage.
- Search within the fruit or at the base of drupelets where mites are feeding using a 20x hand lens. Record percentage infested hills.

#### Management:

- If found a severe levels, a dormant application in early spring (prior to bud break) and/or a summer application as soon as flower buds form is advised the following crop year.





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### Harvest Contaminants

- Harvesting machines are one of the best insect monitoring tools.
- Ride the harvester to see what insect contaminants are coming across the belt. This is one of the best ways to evaluate the effectiveness of your pre-harvest clean up spray.
- Train workers on harvesting machines to communicate presence of harvest contaminants.
- Keep a container for workers to deposit contaminants.
- Many insects can be removed from the sorting belt by hand.
- Continue to use beating trays every two weeks or so to assist with observations from harvester.
- Make sure to check pre-harvest intervals closely on any pesticides used during the harvest period.



### Orange Tortrix (OT)

- Check traps weekly; remove, count and record number of OT moths.
- Look for OT worms in new growth. Record # infested hills.

#### Management:

- Bacillus thuringiensis* (B.t.) is effective if timed properly and it has a short PHI.

#### Threshold:

- Treatment thresholds vary according to end product usage and processor. Check with buyer for their recommended threshold. A good starting threshold is 10% or more infested hills.

### Weevils

- Detection of weevils on the belt indicates that either sprays were not effective or adult weevils are continuing to emerge.

#### Management:

- A spray should be applied to control adult weevils if they are contaminating fruit so they can be controlled before egg-laying.



### Strawberry Crown Moth

- Adults are still emerging throughout the month of July.
- Continue checking pheromone traps weekly and record number of adults trapped.
- At each site, watch for weakened areas containing brittle or collapsed canes. Examine the crown and at the base of small roots for feeding. Record the percentage of infested hills.





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#### Voles

- Fall monitoring is done to determine populations before winter when crop damage can occur.
- Set-up monitoring stations: cover runway or tunnel entrance with a shelter made of roofing shingle or PVC piping (4-8 stations per acre).
- Place apple wedge as bait under shelter; check apple bait every day for 2-3 days for damage.
- Record % of stations positive for feeding damage.
- Monitor again 2-3 weeks after treatment to determine efficacy.

#### Management:

- Treatment threshold: 20-40% positive from monitoring station.
- Remove debris piles, regularly mow field margins, keep large weeds under control.
- Pelletized baits can be broadcast, but degrade quickly.
- Bait stations can be made by making a "T" out of 2-3 inches PVC pipe filled with bait.

For further details:

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#### Blackberry Rust

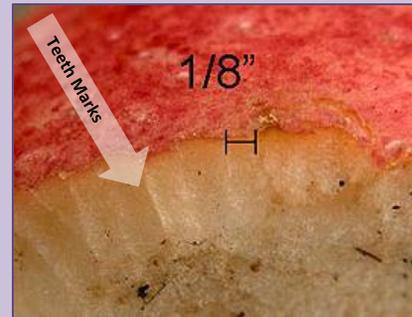
- Black pustules will begin developing among the yellowish-orange pustules in late summer and early fall on infected leaves. These black pustules are responsible for continuing the disease cycle the following spring.
- Conduct a visual search at each site for symptoms associated with blackberry rust and rate infection level on a scale of 0-3.

#### Management:

- Field renovation practices that destroy previously diseased plant parts will contribute to the effectiveness of chemical control program the following spring. Remove fruiting canes as soon as possible and cultivate to cover sources of inoculum.



Black overwintering spores among yellowish pustules





# Natural Enemies

Natural enemies of pests are often present in the landscape and can assist with pest control. To conserve beneficial insects, select pesticides cautiously; avoid pesticides that will kill beneficial insects. Scout for natural enemies as well as pests to understand relationships between the two in a field; often beneficial insects can keep a pest population in check.

Many beneficial insects thrive in areas with a diversity of plant species; they often use plants for pollen and nectar sources and for shelter. Consider providing these types of plants, especially those with several small flowers and a diversity so that flowers are available all season.

## Predatory Mites (*Amblyseius fallacis*):

- This naturally occurring predator mite feeds on spider mites.
- Only visible using 10X hand lens.
- Predatory mites are much faster moving than plant-feeding mites.
- Rates of 1 predatory mite : 10 spider mites has been shown to give good control.



## Spider Mite Destroyer (*Stethorus punctillum*)

- Adult is a small lady beetle (1/10 inch long) and a very effective spider mite predator.
- Larvae are 1/8 inch long



## Minute Pirate Bug:

- This small adult bug (1/16 inch long) feeds on spider mites, aphids, and thrips.
- Minute pirate bug nymph stage (4<sup>th</sup> instar). Front part of body is usually more orange than appears here.



## Lady Beetles

- Both adults and larvae feed on aphids, with some feeding on spider mites.
- Adults are about 3/16 inch long and larvae are 5/16 inch long when mature.





Scouting involves performing usually two or three tasks at each of three to five sites in a field. A minimum of three sites should be checked in small fields (<10 acres) and five sites are usually adequate in larger fields (20 acres or more). Sampling in several sites rather than just in a spot or two will illustrate the range or variation of pest abundance found across a field. Recording information on a site by site basis allows the sampler to return at a later time to determine trends in pest population. Use existing knowledge about the field's history or variations which exist within a field to determine sampling site locations. Sites should be distributed throughout a field and the scout should return to those approximate areas for each visit.

Scouting equipment should include:

- *Magnifying Hand Lens (10X power)*
- *Scouting Report Forms*
- *Traps for Key Pests*
- *Digital Camera*
- *Beating Tray*

**A beating tray** is an 16 X 16 inch canvas or cloth covered tray and is very useful for sampling numerous beneficial and pest insects which reside in the canopy. One such tray has a frame and handle built of ½ inch PVC pipe and a black and white sided cover made of a material called "Sunbrella". Similar trays can be constructed with other locally available materials as well.

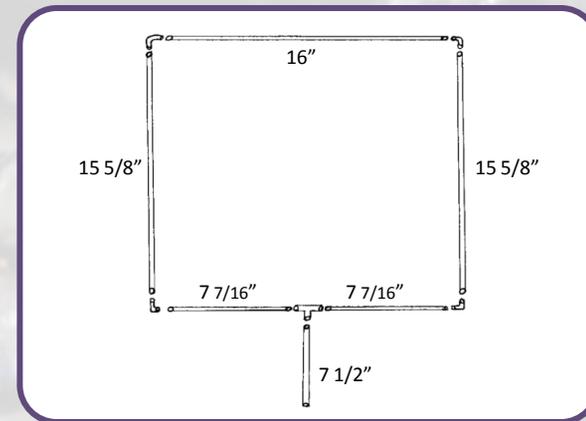
To use the beating tray: hold tray one foot below trellis wire within canopy and shake foliage by grasping wire and shaking, or striking top wire three times with rubber sprayer hose to dislodge insects.

Treatment thresholds for pests in this guide come from published thresholds and those agreed on at a consensus meeting of growers, researchers, and industry representatives in 2008.

Pest and disease treatment thresholds differ between growers, fields, and years; they depend on age of crop, weather, other pest pressures, fruit processing type, price of treatment product, and expected price of fruit. For many of the pests

listed in this guide, growers must make decisions based on current scouting information and information from years past. Treatment decisions should include consultation with the processor or buyer.

For some diseases, thresholds are difficult to determine for a single disease, but a threshold for overall disease occurrence can be made. Accurate record keeping of scouting records, treatments made, and results of treatments will help a grower to determine if treatments made in the past were effective and should be used again.



For more information on Blackberry IPM in Pacific Northwest, see the Blackberry IPM Manual online at: <http://whatcom.wsu.edu/ipm/manual/black>

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