Issue 11 – December 3, 2025

Fruit Crop Report

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Provincial Overview

Good moisture levels for tree fruit and berry crops as we enter winter. The extended fall allowed plants to complete dormancy phase and maximize energy reserves for winter. Wet field conditions, most of November, limited some strawberry field operations. Spreading of straw mulch (see above photo) started in mid-November with most strawberry fields completed as of last week.

Timely Topics - 2025 Field Season Summary

- Early May frost, wind/rain events damaged some tree fruit flowers (i.e. saskatoons)
- Sufficient precipitation across many regions, however the Interlake region experienced drought conditions most of spring/summer which required consistent irrigation, especially for shallow rooted strawberry plants
- Extended warm fall allowed plants to respond to shorter days and complete dormancy phase
- Moist field conditions good for plants to overwinter but hindered field operations

Strawberries

- Acceptable 2024-25 winter survival of plants, +30°C temps in May stressed emerging strawberries.
- Milder July day and night temperatures favoured longer harvest.
- Issues with fruit rot, especially if present in the field previously, in 2024.
- Average to above average yields (~5,500-6,000 lbs/acre; ~1,000-1,200 4L baskets/acre).
- Wet field conditions prevented timely fungicide applications at bloom period.
- Suspect incidence of cyclamen mites or spider mites infestation in some fields
    - Symptoms - crinkled, deformed leaves.
    - Over-winter in plant litter.
    - Suggest fall cultivation between rows or use of miticides to reduce populations.
- In Ontario *Anthracnose* disease is resistant to Group 11 fungicides (Cabrio, Evito, Pristine, Merivon, Quadris, Luna), growers should presume that those resistance issues exist here in Manitoba. Suggest using Group M fungicides: Captan, Copper Based and alternate with: Switch/Button (gp 9,12), Miravis (gp 7,12), Diplomat (gp 9), Inspire Super (gp 3,9).

Saskatoons

- Precipitation during bloom resulted in higher levels of *Entomosporium* Leaf and Berry Spot Disease in many orchards, infected berries lowered marketable yields.
- Average to below average yields (~2,000-2,400 lbs/ac).

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- Wet field conditions and/or frequent rains prevented timely fungicide applications at bloom and post-bloom in some orchards.

Raspberries

- Spotted Wing Drosophila (SWD) not an issue until late July, bulk of harvest completed before then.
- Unsprayed insecticide fields only had 20-25% yield loss, while sprayed fields had <5% yield loss.
- Average yields (~1,000 lbs/ac).

Haskaps

- Above normal temperatures in May advanced berry ripening
- Average yields (~3000-4000 lbs/ac)
- Continued consumer demand for this new early season crop.

Apples

- Above average yield (~5,000 lbs/ ac)
- Extended fall season resulted in complete harvest of late season cultivars
- Good size and flavour in early, mid and late season harvested cultivars
- Black Rot (aka Frog-eye Leaf Spot) an issue in stressed orchards (suppress with Copper spray when tree is at dormant pre-bud break phase early spring and/or after leaves emerge spray with Captan).

Sour Cherries

- Average to above average depending on cultivar's harvest period.
- Some early flowering cultivars affected by late May frost event, i.e. Carmine Jewel.
- Less infestation by SWD.

Outlook for 2026

Strawberries

- Scouting for cyclamen mites, tarnish plant bug and thrips.
- If fruit rot was an issue in 2025, recommend protective fungicides applications early and post bloom.

Saskatoons

- Scout for apple curculio, a weevil type insect that affects saskatoons, apples, plums, chokecherry.
- Overwinters in leaf litter, one generation/yr, larva feed on developing seeds.
- Scout orchard for deep scarred/disfigured berries before and at harvest time.
- If noticing higher levels throughout the orchard consider control measures in 2027.

Market Opportunities 2026 and Beyond

Generally, there is continued strong demand for all locally grown fruit crops. Typically demand exceeds supply in tree fruit crops like haskaps, saskatoons and all berry crops. Good profitability for growers with direct farm sales and good value for consumers buying premium quality, fresh, highly nutritious, flavourful fruit crops at retail prices.

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Strawberries

- Demand exceeding supply, U-Pick market strong, more u-pick sales than pre-pick sales overall which reduces labour costs significantly.
- More strawberry farms needed in the Winnipeg capital region, Altona-Morden-Winkler, Brandon, Westman, Parkland.
- Requirements for new strawberry operations: well-drained soils, acceptable soil pH (7-7.6), an irrigation source, all weather road access and availability of labour, typically youth.

Apples

- Strong fresh sales at farmers markets with similar price as retail.
- Fresh sales of apples need to be of high quality (unblemished, good size and shape) to capture premium prices.
- "B" grade apples (not marketable for fresh sales due to shape, size, fallen on ground, etc.) are marketed wholesale to local cider companies.
- Demand high for Manitoba grown apples with tart-sweet, crispy, complex flavours for fresh and cider sales.

Potential Manitoba Agriculture Insect Pest Surveillance Programs in 2026

i. SWD targeted surveillance in raspberries & saskatoons
ii. Cyclamen Mite- scouting fields after strawberry renovation regrowth
iii. Codling Moth – setting up lure traps in south central apple orchards to determine if present in Manitoba, has not been verified to exist in Manitoba but are present in surrounding provinces and states.

References

Province of Manitoba | agriculture - Fruit Crops
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