

3. **FRUIT GROWERS' LETTER**



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SUN SCALD A PROBLEM TO TRUNK OF FRUIT TREES

Sun scald is a form of winter injury to the trunks of fruit trees. Normally the injury occurs in late winter on the southwest side of the main trunk and larger branches. Bark, being brown or gray, absorbs the sun's rays in midafternoon and often warms up to 20°F. above the surrounding air temperature. This increased temperature often causes the bark tissues of the tree to grow, reducing the tree's cold resistance. Eventually, the bark dries and splits thus weakening or even killing the tree.

Shading the tree trunk, particularly the southwest side with boards or strips of burlap will usually protect the tree from sun scald. Other methods include painting the trunk with outside white latex (waterbase) paint. The white paint helps reduce the wide fluctuations in trunk temperature during bright, sunny days. It should be applied to the entire length of the trunk up to and including the lower crotches. Coverage on the north side of the trunk is not necessary.

You can apply the paint with a paintbrush, hand sprayer, paint roller, air compressor sprayer, or other methods. Use the method that fits best in your enterprise.

THE OCTOBER FREEZE

The recordbreaking temperatures as low as 15°F. in some areas during mid-October caused a significant loss of fruit throughout the apple growing areas of Minnesota.

The losses varied from orchard to orchard, and were determined by which varieties remained to be harvested. Growers with late maturing varieties, such as Regent and Golden Delicious, realized the most fruit loss. Others had nearly finished picking the crop and their losses were relatively small.

Apples that are damaged by freezing temperatures are subject to softening and early deterioration. In addition, the storage life of the fruit is usually shortened.

To determine the extent of injury, you must carefully examine the fruit after the freezing period has ended. Look for brown discoloration of the flesh and a wrinkled skin. Taste the apple, if damage is severe, the flesh is soft and often fermented. If damage to the fruit is only moderate, the fruit should be sold as soon as possible and used for sauce or juice.

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Current information available from University of Minnesota Extension: <http://www.extension.umn.edu>.

CONTROL MICE NOW!

Field mice can be a problem in orchards during the fall, winter, and early spring months, reports Division of Wildlife Services.

Mice damage trees by root pruning and/or trunk and root girdling. Most serious damage occurs when normal food supply is limited, usually during or right after heavy snow cover.

Recommended bait materials are grain bait treated with zinc phosphide, or zinc phosphide-treated apple cubes.

The grain bait may be broadcast by hand or with a cyclone-type seeder at the rate of 6 to 10 pounds per acre in the tree row. When using apple cubes, place them in mouse trails at rate of 5 to 7 quarts per acre.

Weather is Factor

Select warm, clear, quiet days just before freezing weather or snow cover to apply your bait, usually when the grass cover is down from frost and the fruit drops are rotted. Spot treatment during winter and into early spring may be beneficial.

For supply of bait, check with your local orchard supply dealer, or contact the Rodent Control Fund, Agricultural Administration Building, West Lafayette, Ind. 47907.

Caution: When mixing baits, work outside. Avoid breathing the zinc phosphide dust and wear gloves when preparing and distributing baits. After use, carefully wash hands and utensils. Store toxicants in a safe, well-ventilated place.

From American Fruit Grower, November, 1972

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MULCHING STRAWBERRIES

Mulch is used on strawberries to protect the plants from extreme cold during the winter. In addition, mulch helps to provide clean fruit and optimum conditions for picking.

Straw or wild hay are the best mulching materials to use. Pine needles, wood shavings, leaves, or shredded corn stalks often form a dense layer, and smother the strawberry plants. Apply the mulch after the plants become dormant, but before the temperature drops below 20°F. in the fall. Normally, early November is right in the Twin Cities area.

Leave the mulch on as late in the spring as possible to hold back bloom until after frost. Check frequently--if leaves start to turn yellow, remove the mulch at once.

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FOOD PRODUCTION IS IMPORTANT

Norman E. Borlaug, first agriculturist to receive a Nobel Peace Prize, pointed out that in the United States only 4 percent of the people produce enough food for the needs of the rest of the U. S. and enough more to export \$7.8 billion worth of food stuffs. They produce this flood of food on 281,000 acres. If they had used 1940 technology, it would have taken 581,000 acres of land. "Think of the land that has been released for wildlife and recreation," Borlaugh stated.

FUTURE FRUIT MEETINGS

Minnesota-Wisconsin Apple Associations' annual meeting, Madison, Wisconsin, January 23-25, 1973.

Wisconsin-Minnesota Apple Workshop, LaCrosse, Wisconsin, February 1-2, 1973.

Dwarf Fruit Tree Association annual conference, Pantlind Hotel, Grand Rapids, Michigan, March 21-23, 1973.

Minnesota Strawberry Shortcourse, St. Paul Campus, University of Minnesota, March 26, 1973.

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