



Integrated Fire Blight Control Strategies

Posted by [Zea Sonnabend](#)

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[Zea Sonnabend](#)

[Integrated Fire Blight Control Strategies](#)

March 14, 2014 05:07AM

Registered: 10 years ago

Posts: 58

Here is an excerpt from the Organic Center press release:

"Washington, DC (March 3, 2014) – With approved antibiotics for fire blight control expiring for organic apple and pear growers this fall, The Organic Center has released an essential report featuring existing practices and emerging research to help growers control fire blight while maintaining organic certification.

"Grower Lessons and Emerging Research for Developing an Integrated Non-Antibiotic Fire Blight Control Program in Organic Fruit" – available here – collects critical knowledge from U.S. apple and pear growers who already practice fire blight prevention without the commonly used antibiotic oxytetracycline that the National Organic Standards Board will begin sunseting in October 2014."

The live link above did not paste into this box intact, so here is the URL for the free download: [organic-center.org]

While the information is quite west-coast oriented, there is lots of detailed good information here for all organic growers.

[Fruitilicious Farm](#)

Zone 9b in California

Edited 2 time(s). Last edit at 03/15/2014 02:35AM by Michael Phillips.

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[Michael Phillips](#)

[Re: Integrated Fire Blight Control Strategies](#)

February 26, 2016 01:15PM

Moderator

Registered: 11 years ago

Posts: 621

No one ever commented here but I think this "state of the art" report on non-antibiotic control of fire blight from 2014 is quite stellar. There's good explanation of ecosystem factors and the flow of the season. Use of copper early on limits staging areas for the bacterium. I wouldn't want to do this year in and year out but this is relevant if fire blight has established in your orchard the previous season. Too much emphasis seems to be given to lime-sulfur in the early season scenarios but then comes the examination of competitive colonization with important nuance. That area is wide open for further discovery.

There's plenty of details available for thoughtful growers to come up with a salient program of their own. I will continue to work with [homegrown solutions](#) as that is going to become even more critical in the years ahead. Others can do products. Results should be reported back through network research efforts. Fire blight, like cancer, is not a foregone conclusion. But people need to shift their mindsets!

[Lost Nation Orchard](#)

Zone 4b in New Hampshire

Edited 1 time(s). Last edit at 02/26/2016 01:17PM by Michael Phillips.

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[Mike Biltonen](#)

[Re: Integrated Fire Blight Control Strategies](#)

February 26, 2016 03:56PM

Registered: 10 years ago

Posts: 298

Tis' true the report is stellar. It also makes numerous mentions of "products" as potential remedies for fireblight and other diseases, as well as those points Michael brings out. It mentions several cultural and horticultural things that growers can do to reduce the fireblight in their orchards, as well. I echo Michael's thoughts on copper -- it is a way overused and over-relied upon tactic. Dealing with fireblight is a package deal. There are no silver bullets. Therefore, I don't think the debate here should be about products vs. homemade remedies, but rather about turning a critical eye to whatever is being proposed. I certainly am not a stalwart advocate for a product based approach -- they are expensive and there's a lot of snake oil out there -- most simply don't work; but I will consider them. My feeling is that some of them may hold a key to better homemade remedies. Regalia is a good example. Essential oils (thyme especially is a powerful natural antibiotic), too. As well, there are many growers, perhaps even some listening in here that can't make homemade remedies (for whatever reason) and need alternatives that will work for them in their situation because they want to grow good fruit. Keeping an open mind, as well as a critical eye, is the key point I'm trying to make. My view is that every product or control remedy (homemade or not) needs to be scientifically evaluated and compared to standards, other controls, plain water, and doing nothing at all (UTC). Without this, the only analyses seem to be anecdotal - and (don't get me wrong) a good, critical, anecdotal observation can make a solid case for a

next level examination, but it isn't necessarily proof in and of itself. And the research doesn't need to be done at some ivory tower research farm nor does it need to be publishable data. But it does need to be done. In your backyard, at your neighbor's orchard, wherever. Several years ago this group tried to get a research network going. To my knowledge it never really got off the ground. I'd like to propose that this be revived and perhaps discussed on this forum and at Stump Spouts as there is much to be gained from an active, critically-engaged HON research network. As Michael pointed out, fireblight is not a foregone conclusion, but it also not going away. We just need to be smart about it and not ignore it.

[Mike Biltonen, Know Your Roots](#)

Zone 5b in New York

[Reply](#) [Quote](#)

[Robbie Anderman](#)

[Re: Integrated Fire Blight Control Strategies](#)

June 09, 2016 08:23PM

Registered: 10 years ago

Posts: 56

Well, as I've said elsewhere, I now have fireblight showing its sad face for the first time in 30 years here in the hills west of Ottawa, Ontario.

Surprising with the HOT dry spring... yet here it is. Clearly identified. The winter and spring have been full of too many other diversions, so no good healthy spraying of the orchard occurred.

I'm guessing what remains now is to cut back every branch that has any sign of browned flowers to 12" beyond the last infection. Then spray with EM, molasses, kelp, and maybe some fish emulsion. Would Neem oil help, too?

That's all the arsenal I have available at the moment. I might be able to find some thyme oil, tho' that's kinda doubtful. No hops around til autumn.

Any other suggestions as I aim to set forth on this path Friday morning? (scything under the trees is happening today to make access easier and finding the cut off branches possible)

Thanks for keeping this forum alive and full of helpful information.

Robbie

[Morninglory Farm](#)

Zone 3b* in Ontario

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