

# Pest management for fruit trees

**E**very few years I like to remind anyone who has fruit trees of the importance of controlling the pests that are attracted to them. Not only is the fruit a lot more appealing, but by controlling the pests we are making pest control more effective for others. Most tree fruit insect pests can easily travel a mile searching for a host plant. By not maintaining a low pest environment around your trees, you create a larger jumping off zone for pests, plus you help new invasive pests spread over large areas.

As our climate has trended a little warmer over the past few decades, we have seen an increase in the number of pests and an increase in the number of resulting broods from the pests. Over the past few years, our recent warm spells have not only provided very long hot summers, but even potentially more damaging we have experienced milder winters with very few extended cold temperatures that were harsh enough to kill off invasive insects.

Insects like the Brown Marmorated Stink Bug (BMSB) have been spreading rapidly throughout the Willamette Valley, feeding on a wide variety of crops including pears,



**Steve Renquist**  
*Extension Spotlight*

apples, peaches, cherries, filberts, and many vegetables. The Spotted Wing Drosophila (SWD) vinegar fly has become a widespread pest to all soft fruit orchard and berry crops. The SWD is especially troublesome to blueberry, raspberry, blackberry, cherry, and figs, and to a lesser degree to peaches, and grapes. It doesn't matter if you are a gardener or a commercial grower. To produce nice quality fruit crops requires good Integrated Pest Management (IPM) skills.

Why is it so important to learn IPM skills? Primarily because IPM methods use low input and low toxicity systems to control pests. These low input systems use the latest research based methods which protect the health of pollinators, and predator insects that work with us to control the destructive pests. IPM systems also require trapping of pests like codling moth or SWD so you know when to apply controls and when you can hold off. Calendar spray schedules that you make weekly, generally waste your time, waste product plus their costs, and potentially hurt beneficial insects.

Master Gardeners or the OSU Extension Horticulture Agent can help you learn the type of program

you will need. We have printed orchard pest control brochures we can share with you. The brochures can help you understand what types of insect or disease pests are likely in our area, when they occur, what practices help to minimize their spread, and what organically registered products can help you control them.

We also have several classes coming soon at the Douglas County OSU Extension office. On October 28, at 9am to 1pm we have our annual fall IPM Orchard Pest Management class. The class focuses on a different set of orchard pests each year. The class is primarily for commercial growers needing pesticide license recertification, but serious gardeners are also welcome. Also, registrations are now being accepted for our annual Master Gardener Program class of 2016; register now, class size is limited. If you would like more information on either training program or other Douglas County OSU Extension programs, information is available on the Web at: <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/douglas/>.

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*Steve Renquist is the Horticulture Extension Agent for OSU Extension Service of Douglas County. Steve can be reached by email [renquist@oregonstate.edu](mailto:renquist@oregonstate.edu) or phone at 541-236-3047.*