



Department of
Agriculture and Food



Journal of the Department of
Agriculture, Western Australia,
Series 4

Volume 11
Number 11 1969

Article 11

1-1-1970

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Department of Agriculture, Western Australia

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Recommended Citation

Department of Agriculture, Western Australia (1970) "Control of bitter pit on Granny Smith apples," *Journal of the Department of Agriculture, Western Australia, Series 4*: Vol. 11 : No. 11 , Article 11.

Available at: https://researchlibrary.agric.wa.gov.au/journal_agriculture4/vol11/iss11/11

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CONTROL OF BITTER PIT ON GRANNY SMITH APPLES

BITTER PIT is a serious threat to Western Australia's apple export markets and effective control is essential.

The following programme of calcium nitrate sprays, starting in mid-December, will prevent development of the disorder.

Thorough spraying

Thoroughly spray all fruit on trees with calcium nitrate. Each fruit should be well wetted. This is the only available protection against bitter pit.

More sprays

Four and possibly five evenly spaced sprays are needed.

Strength

Use 8 lb. calcium nitrate per 100 gal. water.

Add a wetting agent unless it has previously caused leaf scorch.

Don't spray in late afternoon or under slow drying conditions.

Don't mix calcium nitrate with other sprays, particularly emulsifiable concentrates or spraying oils, or salty water.

Timing

First spray before mid-December. Use at least three evenly spaced sprays before the end of January.

Susceptible varieties

Granny Smiths as well as Cleopatras, Golden Delicious and Delicious need treatment.

Post harvest dip

An additional spray before picking, or a dip for picked fruit, of 15 lb. calcium nitrate in 100 gal. water may further reduce bitter pit.

Calcium nitrate can be used with Diphenylamine and Ethoxyquin post harvest dips to control both pit and superficial scald but such fruit must only be sold on markets where treatment with these chemicals is permitted.

Pit-prone fruit

Fruit from sections of an orchard consistently affected with bitter pit should not be offered for export but sold only on the local market.

This fruit should not be cold stored.