Don't neglect bitter pit sprays

Department of Agriculture, Western Australia

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DON'T NEGLECT BITTER PIT SPRAYS!

BITTER pit is a serious fault in export apples and each year considerable quantities of fruit are rejected for export on this account. Now that control measures are available, it is most important that they be applied.

Bad bitter pit years are unpredictable and it is impossible to say with any degree of certainty in December, when the calcium spray programme must commence, what the position will be at harvest.

Calcium nitrate sprays are inexpensive and should be applied as a routine programme each year as an insurance against pit.

The following measures are recommended:

- The varieties to be sprayed with calcium nitrate for pit control in Western Australia are Granny Smith, Cleopatra, and Golden Delicious.
- Use 10 lb. of calcium nitrate per 100 gallons of water with the addition of 2 fl. oz. of wetting agent.
- Do not mix with other spray material.
- The minimum requirement for calcium nitrate applications is three sprays, applied in early December, early January and early February. Under conditions where severe pit is likely more sprays should be used.
- Thoroughly wet the foliage and fruit. Avoid spraying too late in the day for the spray to dry before nightfall.
- Avoid early harvesting wherever possible, particularly on highly susceptible sections of orchard.
- Pit susceptibility is directly affected by fruit size; large fruit is more prone to pit. Fruit from young trees should be disposed of quickly on the local market and not exported or held for long storage.

Full details of Bitter Pit control will be found in Department of Agriculture Bulletin 32971.
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