



## Notes by Stephen Steward, Apprentice

### ORCHARD & MENTOR

A&A Orchards in Green Forest, AR.

John Aselage been producing apples and peaches since 1980. John will be mentoring Stephen during his Organic Apple Apprenticeship at A & A Orchards.

During the 2010 season, Stephen hopes to become a more proficient orchardist by hands-on experiences with:

- fruit production practices,
- assessing disease and pest damage,
- conducting on-farm research with nutrition and pest management,
- making decisions to use appropriate pest management practices
- to learn practices and products approved by OMRI for organic apple production,
- become aware of what is required for an orchard to be certified as organic
- assist in picking fruit
- assist with fruit sales at farmers' market.



PERIMETER TRAP TO MONITOR FOR PLUM CURCULIO

### MY FIRST TWO WEEKS:

Depending on cold, I live next to the orchard either in my tent or in the trailer provided.

Most days begin by walking the orchard with John where I learned the history of the orchard and its future and discussing various aspects of orchard production.

#### Activities so far include:

- Pruning/training/restoring apple trees
- Pruning/thinning peaches
- Learning about how to use sprayer equipment for spray applications
- Making weekly records of pheromone trap catches of several pest species:
  - plum curculio, Oriental fruit moth, codling moth, San Jose scale
- Assisted Dr. Donn Johnson and Sam Kim (Ph.D. student) with a research and demonstration project to manage plum curculio.
  - every 5<sup>th</sup> tree in orchard perimeter adjacent to woodlot is baited to attract plum curculio as they enter the orchard and baited trees sprayed twice weekly with Pyganic to kill plum curculio adults attracted to the trees so they do not disperse into the orchard and damage fruit.
- Spend time observing the phenology and morphology of the trees in addition to the ecology and biodiversity of the overall orchard

## KEY CONCERNS:

- Groundcover management demonstration:
  - local sourcing of input materials (wood mulch, natural fertilizer)
- Learn about marketing strategies:
  - Sales to csa's,
  - Value added products,
  - Alternate farmer's markets,
  - U-pick,
  - Distribution of fruit by websites:
    - localharvest.org
    - locallygrown.net,
- I am expecting that the chance to play a part in further developing organic apple production in the Ozarks and building regional markets will be highly rewarding.



*SPRAYING BAITED PERIMETER APPLE TREE WITH PYGANIC TO MANAGE PLUM CURCULIO*



*PLUM CURCULIO EGG IN FRUIT*

## PERSONAL OBJECTIVES:

1. To synthesize current knowledge and notes into a concise document of some form for my final report.
2. To develop and apply alternative integrated pest management strategies to the orchard when possible.
3. To have role in further developing organic apple production in the Ozarks and building regional markets will be highly rewarding.

## PREDICTED PEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES:

- **8 May:** Codling moth hatch starts which will require weekly applications of OMRI approved compounds of either Entrust or a granulosis virus formulation.
- **13-14 May** (UA-Farm and Rom Orchard) and on **18 May** (A&A Orchard): apply 200 mating disruption dispensers per acre in upper tree canopy to disrupt mating of codling moth and oriental fruit moth until later August.

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