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Rijk Zwaan Sweet Peppers, Canada – general overview.

The first fruits are mostly on the plants now. It's good to consider that it's important to keep the speed in the plant before the next fruit setting. The EC can come down a bit to ensure that the swelling fruits can get water easy enough, but it's still best to keep the drip EC relatively high. Giving more water is necessary now. There are small fruits to feed and new growth to support. Giving too much water of course is never a good idea, but don't restrict the water with the intention of a generative steering. Use your temperature set points (go lower) to help with the setting in low light, not the irrigation. The CO₂ level can be raised with the higher light conditions to ensure that as many assimilates are made as possible. When the conditions are good for more CO₂, then also make sure you give enough water with sufficient levels of fertilizer. The speed in the plant will ensure that these assimilates are in balance with the new growth. Sometimes this means you have to make your day temperature go a little longer to make sure the plant can utilize the extra sugars. It's necessary for you to create this speed with a high enough 24 hr temperature. Hopefully the fruit load you have on the plant is not requiring you to slow down excessively when you get a dark period in the weather. Better to prune back to a smaller fruit load for the first set and ensure that when a dark period comes, you are still control. This means you can keep the speed in the plant with a high enough 24hr average and still have enough assimilates available for the new growth and fruit development. New growth means new flowers and more chances for fruit setting. Slowing down on account of a high fruit load means waiting longer for new setting opportunities and a longer time in fruit colouring. The advantage of an early first setting should be that you can have an early second setting. This advantage is lost if the fruit load on the first setting is too large or too early.

When the plant is growing in balance and has enough light, it will set fruits.

Below are some points regarding specific varieties:

Baselga RZ, early setting is good. Fruit shape this year looks to be very good on the early fruits. During the low light periods, growers generally kept a high EC and gave larger shots of water to ensure this variety had enough food to do its growth and setting, and they kept the 24 hr temperature high. There's no need with this variety to go into a fast pre night temperature drop. Also in the afternoon, it's not necessary to go into a high temperature boost. The climate needs to be fast (24 hr temp.), but it can be a bit more flat day/ night than other varieties.

Gilmour RZ (35-306), this new orange variety does its best in the summer to late season. The early setting is about the same as Orangerie RZ. Similar generative cues are needed to help in setting as are necessary in Orangerie. For example, a pre night temperature drop can be used following an afternoon boost to assist keeping the flowers generative. If you are growing in the same greenhouse area as Orangerie, It could be necessary to keep some extra leaves in Gilmour or to come back in the night with an irrigation shot. After some time, this variety might require a bit more flat day/ night temperature comparing to Orangerie, as it stays thinner and is easier in balance in the summer climate. Fruit shape and quality are very good.

Vancouver RZ, this yellow variety is more open with a smaller, flatter leaf comparing to Baselga, but it can be grown similar to Baselga. Keep the 24 hr temperature relatively fast and don't go too cold in the pre or post night. The fruits are a bit smaller than Baselga.

Richmond RZ, this yellow variety looks similar in some ways to Baselga. It has vigorous growth with a large size leaf. Unlike Baselga, it can use a small pre night temperature drop. Also a bit higher afternoon boost temperature. The early fruits are less prone to being pumpkin shaped from colder temperatures. After the longest day, steer more generative than Baselga.

Redwing RZ, a large afternoon boost followed by a lower than average pre night temperature drop is necessary to consider for this very vigorous red variety. Starting with a high EC also helps. A lot of assimilates are made by this variety, it always looks heavy with big leaves and thick stems. Try and set some early fruits comparing to your other varieties to help keep balance. Grow generatively. Redwing always looks vigorous, but fortunately it's also very generative in setting fruits.

35-162 RZ, generally we see this new red is quite vigorous and needs generative steering for plant balance. The plant will continue to look strong as the season continues. You can count on the large leaves for good fruit coverage. As with Orangery RZ, you want to limit any night irrigations after the longest day, to make sure the plant doesn't go too far to the vegetative direction.

35-161 RZ, our newest red is the most in balance of the three Canadian RZ reds. There is still good power and the plant looks more open with a smaller, flatter leaf. Early setting is just average, but you can expect very high production levels as the light increases – along with very good fruit quality.

I look forward to seeing you on my next visit!

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