

# The Farm Gate

Organic Grower Newsletter

TerraLink Horticulture Inc.

June 2010

## Sustainability

### Fall Cover Crops

Will you have bare fields this fall?

How you care for your land this fall will play a large role in determining the quality of your crop next year. Cover crops are one of the best ways to prepare your fields for future crops. There are many benefits of cover cropping; these are just a few:



#### Weed Control

Cover crops can greatly decrease the amount of weeds in spring by crowding out the undesirable plants as they compete for light, nutrients, moisture and space.

#### Soil Conservation

One of the most common reasons land owners plant cover crops is to provide protection for the soil from erosion by wind and rain. Preventing the loss of topsoil is crucial for future crop health.

#### Improved Soil Quality

Cover crops increase soil organic matter, replacing much of what is lost during crop production. This results in improved soil structure. Soil organic matter is also one of the main components of the soil that holds onto plant nutrients. Future crops in your field will survive drought and stress better with the improved soil conditions.

#### Nitrogen Fixation

The legume cover crops have special adaptations to let them obtain their own nitrogen from forms that are unavailable to all other plants. This nitrogen will then be available to your crops when the cover crop biomass breaks down after being tilled in.

There are several types of cover crop seed available. Contact us to find out which type would be suitable for you.

#### Pest Exclusion

### Floating Row Covers in Organic Production

Producers of organic crops have very few options in insect pest control. Growers of conventional crops can fall back on pesticide sprays, but not many organic pest control chemicals are available and registered. One effective non-chemical option for organic producers is insect exclusion using floating row covers. Although quite expensive, careful handling to avoid damage can extend the life of the material to two or even three years to reduce the cost per year. We still have one size left in stock in Abbotsford. Call and ask at the Sales Desk today for more information.



## Boxes, Flats and Baskets

### Produce Packaging for Fresh Market Sales

#### Blueberry Boxes:

For fresh market sales of blueberries, we stock sturdy corrugated boxes in two sizes: 5 lbs or 10 lbs of fruit. Our boxes have attractive blue and green graphics, with stacking tabs and good ventilation.



#### Berry Flats:

White with colorful red, blue and green graphics of berries on

the sides, these flats are perfect for fresh market berry sales. These flats will hold twelve of the pressed green fibre pints or four of the rectangle #1 1/2 size. Talk about versatility!

#### Baskets and Trays:

We have a wide choice of green pressed fiber berry baskets, including #5, #3, #1.5, quart and pint.



*Rooted in your community.*

**TerraLink**

## Pest Control

# Spotted Wing Drosophila Fruit Fly – A New Pest

Although several articles have been written about Spotted Wing Drosophila (SWD) and a presentation was made on it at the LMHIA Short Course in January, we're going to repeat the information here again. It won't hurt to hear it all again, this has to be understood – this new pest could be very damaging and difficult to control.

SWD (*Drosophila suzukii*) is native to Southeast Asia, preferring warm temperatures and therefore going through many more life cycles per year than the fruit fly we are all familiar with. Unlike our regular fruit fly which only infests fallen, over-ripe or decaying fruit, SWD lays eggs in harvestable fruit while still on the bush. While the regular fruit fly is only annoying, SWD will cause crop loss. No one wants to bite into a blueberry and find a maggot in it. All types of berry crops are subject to infestation.

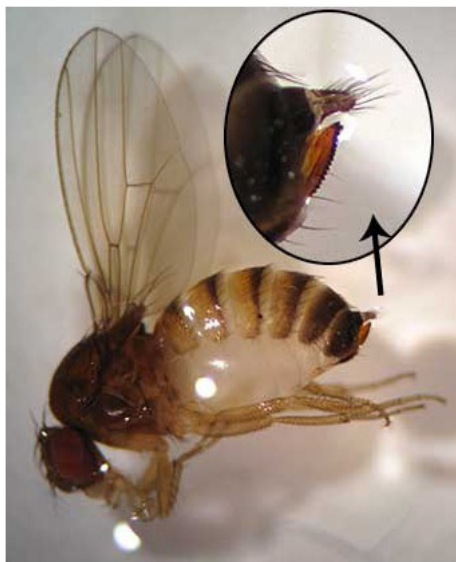


Figure 1. Spotted Wing Drosophila Adult Female. Inset shows ovipositor.

Because the adult flies are quite small and look similar to other fruit fly species, the only way to confirm the presence of SWD will be to take captive adult flies, or fruit that is possibly infested, to the BCMAL Plant Diagnostic Laboratory in Abbotsford. In the Okanagan, another contact is Susanna Acheampong, Entomologist at BCMAL at the Kelowna office. For those with good eyes and in possession of a magnifying glass, the photos below show the distinguishing features of SWD adults

Much work has been done by government so far, and plans are set to develop surveillance and management plans to determine when SWD first appears in the spring and in which crops. At this time, control methods and products for SWD have not been finalized. For organic producers, the industry has already received emergency registration for Entrust 80 W, a spinosad product that is OMRI listed, valid until October 31st.



Figure 2. Spotted Wing Drosophila Adult Male with wing spots

To find out more about SWD, call BCMAL in Abbotsford or Kelowna or visit their web page at <http://www.al.gov.bc.ca/cropprot/swd.htm>, or call the Sales Desk at TerraLink, 1-800-661-4559 or 604-864-9044.

Photos from Dr. Sheila Fitzpatrick, Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada at Pacific Agri-Food Research Centre in Agassiz.

## Weed Control

# Need to Control Weeds? Get Yourself a Dragon!



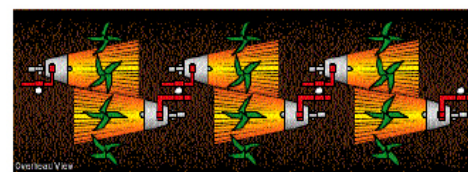
In fact, why don't you get yourself a Red Dragon? The method of using flame to control weeds has been used for about a century, and Flame Engineering has been in business for about half that time. This very experienced and established company offers its Red Dragon flame

products through Gro-tec, the equipment division of TerraLink Horticulture. Red Dragon flamers are available in large tractor-mounted devices all the way down to light, hand-held convenience-sized torch kits.

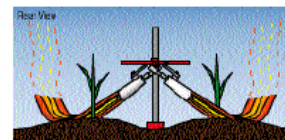


The use of flaming is well documented in major crops such as potatoes, silage and sweet corn, cole crops, onions, tree fruits, grapes, blueberries and cane fruits.

## STAGGERED CROSS FLAMING



Generally torches are staggered when moving through the row so as not to collide with the flame from the opposite burner. By directing the crop row from both sides, more complete coverage and faster ground speeds are possible.



Burners are initially set at an angle of 30 to 60 degrees from horizontal and 4 to 10 inches from the crop.

Flaming subjects weeds to intense heat over a very short period of time, stripping the waxy coating on the leaves and bursting plant cells. The weeds are usually dead within one day. It is a fast way to solve you weed control problems in an organic production setting, and we have supplied many flamers to many satisfied customers since becoming distributors in 2006. Stop draggin' your feet. Get yourself a Red Dragon.

## TerraLink's Biological Controls Product Guide

Request a copy from  
[lisa@tlhort.com](mailto:lisa@tlhort.com), or  
pick one up in our  
Abbotsford location.

