

# WHITESBOG CONSERVATION NURSERY

## BLUEBERRY PLANTS

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**JOSEPH J. WHITE, Inc.**

Whitesbog, N. J.

## BLUEBERRY FRUIT FLY IN NEW JERSEY

### **While A Pest, Its Control by Dust on Cultivated Berries May Prove a Benefit in Long Run.**

By ELIZABETH C. WHITE

For more than ten years the shippers and canners of wild blueberries have had difficulty in getting their berries on the market in condition to satisfy the inspectors charged with the enforcement of the Federal Pure Food Law.

During the three memorable August days that I spent in the blueberry barrens of Maine with Dr. Neil E. Stevens and Dr. Edith Patch of the Maine Experiment Station I first learned what a pest the Fruit Fly could be. The canners of Washington County were then struggling with the problem of how to keep the maggots out of their canned product so that it might receive the O. K. of the inspectors for interstate commerce. This was a new problem and very embarrassing.

A few years later the Federal inspectors came to investigate the condition, as to Fruit Fly infestation, of our cultivated berries. They said that all about us in New Jersey they had found the wild fruit badly infested. No maggots were found, however, in the cultivated fruit. We thought our clean cultivation was our protection, as the flies overwinter as pupae just under the surface of the soil. The clean cultivation probably did have much to do in checking the building up of infestation in the cultivated fields, but at last proved insufficient.

During the summer of 1935 several shipments made by members of the Blueberry Co-operative Association were condemned in New York City by the Federal inspectors because of Fruit Fly infestation. This caused much consternation among the growers of New Jersey. All the research work done in Maine was carefully canvassed by Mr. C. S. Beckwith, who found

that for Maine the life history of the insect had been well worked out. Arrangements were made so that a plane was ready to go in the field as soon as Mr. Beckwith's observations of the emergence of the flies should give the exact date. All the blueberry fields at Whitesbog and most of the other larger plantations were dusted twice.

There was no trouble with infested berries in the New York market during the summer of 1936. This was undoubtedly in part the result of more careful and frequent picking by the growers and more favorable weather conditions. There was a small plot, however, at Whitesbog which had not been dusted. These berries were considerably infested in spite of frequent picking. This indicates that a large part of the freedom from trouble came as a result of the dusting.

While the Fruit Fly appears as a troublesome enemy to blueberry growers it may well be that in the long run it will prove one of the best friends of the industry. It is

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**Blueberry Fruit Fly**  
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a native insect and nearly all the wild berries are more or less infested. We may anticipate, therefore, that the removal of the competition of wild fruit, because of Federal inspection, will offset the extra care needed to control this insect.

**Some Facts and Figures**  
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been made, it has been less marked than that in insect and disease control. In the survey in Barnstable County already referred to, 69 per cent of the growers replying considered weeds a serious problem.

Hand weeding is the leading practice. While this is feasible when done consistently each year, it may not be so on bogs that have been neglected and are in bad condition. Chemical treatment has been confined largely to the use of iron sulphate to kill ferns. Recent studies at the Cranberry Experiment Station suggest great possibilities in the use of chemicals on other weeds. Spraying of wild bean with sodium arsenate is found of value. Kerosene promises to control grasses, rushes, sedges, skunk cabbage, loosestrife and horsetail. Research in weed eradication should proceed aggressively.

**Re-sanding**

This important practice is often neglected, probably because of its

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cost and the fact that bogs often product fairly well without it.

Re-sanding cranberry bogs at least every third year is a valuable control of the tipworm and girdler and helps bogs recover from false blossom. It also helps as frost protection and keeps the vines in good condition.

The chief problems seem to be to impress growers with the impor-

tance of re-sanding tod to work out a system for applying the sand. It is often spread on the ice during the winter and most growers apply it to the vines with wheelbarrows and shovels. Some managers of large areas lay tracks and use cars drawn by a locomotive driven with a small gasoline engine. A study of relative costs might help here.

(To be continued)