

EASTERN MICHIGAN APPLE HARVEST REPORT

REPORT #1 – August 31, 2010

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A short synopsis of where we are at with apple harvest follows. I will have a more detailed report for you tomorrow morning, with the results of analysis of five varieties harvested yesterday from east Michigan.

This is the first message of the 2010 apple harvest that I am sending to an email list of apple growers that I used last season. If you no longer need this information, just sent an email to my outstanding secretary, Debbie Clark, by clicking on the following link and she will remove you from the list clarkde@msu.edu .

Apple harvest continues for many strains of Gala, some are far enough along in the maturity window to just starting to feel greasy. Honeycrisp harvest is just starting at a few farms; most are a few days off for their first light picking. McIntosh are very close as well, just a few days for early strains. Golden Supreme harvest will most likely begin over the weekend or early next week.

Even though the degree day accumulations continue to move farther ahead than normal, the predicted harvest dates will stay the same. We use the weather data shortly after bloom to determine these harvest dates and the weather for the rest of the summer usually has only a small effect on changing harvest dates. The one exception is Gala. This variety can move ahead in harvest with hot, sunny weather and that's just what it seems to be doing this year. In early testing done on the Ridge of several Gala strains, Amy Irish-Brown and Phil Schwallier are noticing that they seem to be moving along very quickly in their maturity development and some redder strains are just about ready now. The southwest Michigan apple growing area is reporting the same thing in Gala. The hot weather tends to make Gala more greasy or waxy and current thoughts are that it might not have a lot of shelf life if not picked early enough. There seems to be quite a bit of variability from block to block with Gala this year and growers are encouraged to keep a close eye on this variety so as to pick it before it gets too far in its maturity to be stored well.

For other apple varieties, we are noticing that many have brown to black seeds already - even those with later harvest dates.

There is some drop being reported in earlier varieties. Apples are reported as being very loose in some blocks.