

IMAGES FROM THE Maritime Wild Blueberry Producers First Field Day Event - July 15, 2017



Alice Pugsley, WBPANS director, working at the Wild Blueberry Festival Booth. The event has grown to include over 60 community events during late August. (Rees Photo)



Even though the industry is not as robust as other years, Bee Pollinated set up a display inside DBE's automated manufacturing building. (Rees Photo)



Two lines to get your plate, bun, salads and vegetables move quickly before heading to the three chefs to get loaded up with large portion of roast beef. (Rees Photo)

Plastic Injection in Collingwood

Continued from page B1 rigid and will work better on the new square sprockets, which the company is now able to make.

Steven says the newest injection molder is fully automated and can run 24 hours a day without an operator. If there is a problem the machine can correct itself, or an operator with a computer can make adjustments from another location. The size of the belt links can be changed from the traditional eight inch width up to fourteen inches.

Now that the blueberry industry is suffering a downturn, due to high production levels and extremely low

prices, Steven has been traveling the region looking for work in other sectors. He wants to use the company's plastic injection molding expertise to help other companies in the region. Now that the company has some extra capacity, it's a great time to explore other sectors.

He is finding a lot of interest in the fishing industry where conveyors are used and there's a lot of product to be moved either at sea or in processing plants on-land. The region's apple industry is another segment of the processing and product handling industry which shows great potential.

Bring out the Best in Bees for your Blueberries

By Brady Code

Bees do a lot for your lowbush blueberries. The question is - what can you do for the bees in your fields? The short answer is quite a bit. But first, let's look at how managed and wild bees fit within your operation.

Lowbush blueberries need to be cross-pollinated - an essential service that several different types of pollinators provide. Fortunately, a large pollinating workforce isn't hard to come by, with commercially-available managed bees as well as over 60 documented species of wild bees.

Managed and wild bees can provide complementary pollination services, and when both groups thrive in blueberry fields, the result is a positive impact on blueberry pollination and the subsequent fruit set.

Hive rental and pollination services will likely be one of your top input decisions and investments this season. That's why you should build strong relationships with beekeepers and other managed bee providers, while getting the most up-to-date information about the size and strength of their honeybee colonies.

Next, take time in the fall to create a logistics plan that covers pollination rental fees, which of your fields require bees and what's needed to safely transport, unload and locate hives.

Managed bees are typically moved into the field at 10-25 per cent blueberry bloom, or when there are enough flow-

ers to support the bees so that they become flower-constant to the blueberry crops. If they're moved in too early, the bees will find a cherry or apple tree to forage on before your blueberries are in bloom.

Your main goal with respect to the crop is to have pollination occur evenly and during a short concentrated time period so that blueberries ripen and develop to be at the same crop stage for harvest.

One of the biggest advantages with wild bees is the fact that they've evolved over time with the blueberry crop and climate.

Bumblebees, for example, have longer tongues that allow them to reach further

into blueberry flowers for nectar. Other wild bee species are able to buzz pollinate by vibrating their flight muscles to "shake" pollen out of deeper-set flowers.

Wild bees also come out and forage for pollen at lower temperatures, in wet, rainy conditions, and even in fairly mountainous areas with higher crosswinds where managed bees may struggle.

While managed bees are in your fields for a short, finite period, wild bees are there for the whole season, with different species present at various points throughout the year. This is why it's important to think about providing a good habitat and strong food supply for the months and weeks before

and after blueberry bloom.

Poorly producing or fallow land, ditches and road edges are all prime areas where you could plant native wild flowers (rhododendron, fireweed, clover, asters and chokecherries) to provide native habitats for wild bees and food sources for bees after blueberry bloom.

Wild bees, and to a lesser extent, managed bees, depend on the landscape to thrive and perform their pollination work effectively. With the help of blueberry producers, there's an opportunity to further enhance the environment for these bees in a way that will also help optimize pollination and set the stage for a strong, healthy, productive blueberry crop.

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