

Fruit Begins to Bloom

Days suitable for field work were 3.0. There were measurable amounts of rainfall during the week across most of the state, with over an inch of rain in many localities April 13, 2004. Temperatures were near normal in most areas of the state for much of the week; however, Sunday, April 18, 2004, temperatures rose to ten or more degrees above normal in many localities. Soil moisture was rated 40% adequate and 60% surplus. Irrigation water supplies were rated 55% adequate and 45% surplus. Farmers were busy fertilizing, plowing, and planting where conditions allowed. Barley, hay, and winter wheat fields were rated fair to good condition. Alfalfa hay started to green up in some central localities. Vegetables were planted under plastic tunnels in southern portions of the state. Greenhouse grown cabbage and escarole were transplanted in some localities. Most other greenhouse grown vegetables were awaiting warmer weather before transplanting activities will occur. Asparagus harvest began in the central and south; and spinach harvest started in some areas of the south. Spring season vegetables and potatoes were planted in some locations. In the south, planting of white potatoes was finishing. Peaches and apples were rated in mostly good condition. Peaches were ready to bloom in the north, and were blooming in the central and southern portions of the state. Apples had a tight cluster in the south; and in the north buds were swelling and spurs were opening. Blueberries were rated mostly in good condition, and displayed a tight bud in southern localities. Strawberry plants in the south were rated in poor condition, and it was observed that plants were badly damaged under plastic. There were reports of sporadic blooming to some small strawberry plants in the southern portions of the state.

JERSEY FRESH AVAILABILITY FOR APRIL 19, 2004

Arugula & Kale - Being harvested in minimal volume. Volume should begin to pick up next week. Baby Arugula should be available by the end of the week in minimal volume.

Asparagus - With the warmer weather this past week, the harvest has begun with light volume. Volume should begin to pick up next week.

Cilantro - A little bit of over-wintered product is available now and for a couple of weeks. Spring planted is already available in very light quantities.

Dandelions - Over-wintered product is finishing up. Spring planted available by mid-May.

Green Onions & Leeks - A small volume of over-wintered product is available for a few weeks.

Parsley - A bit of over-wintered product available. Spring planted product is also available in very light volume.

Radishes - Are being harvested in some volume now with increased volume in the next weeks.

Spinach - A small volume of over-wintered product is available now and for another couple of weeks or so. Spring planted should be available by mid-May. Baby Spinach available in two weeks.

JERSEY FRESH FORECAST

Beets - Just transplanted recently. Harvest should begin in another month or so.

Cabbage - Just transplanted recently. Won't be ready until late May or early June.

Collards - Should begin harvesting around the third week of May.

Dill - Should be available by the third week of May.

Escarole/Endive - Should begin harvesting around the end of May.

Lettuce - Should begin harvesting some Boston and Red and Green Leaf lettuces next week with increased volume the following week. Romaine available about the second or third week of May.

Strawberries - Jersey Fresh Chandler variety berries are picked ripe and arrive in our markets quicker and fresher than the competition. Our berries have more red interior color and a larger berry size since they're physically more mature and ripe. They're a better quality and better tasting product than other berries. One chain was selling them at almost twice the price as other berries last year and could not keep them in stock.

Unfortunately, the winter was very hard on the plugs that were planted last summer. It seems that we have lost a significant amount of our expected '04 production. Early harvests are expected to begin in mid-May, while the bulk of the crop will be harvested towards the end of May, with lower volumes to continue through the first week of June.

Turnips - Should begin harvesting around the end of May.