

WSJM May 18, 2005 - 2005 CAT Alerts

This is Al Gaus the Berrien County Extension Educator for fruits and ornamentals reporting from the MSU Extension office in Berrien County.

If you are a commercial producer of fruit, vegetables, field crops, or ornamentals, or are involved with turf maintenance, or operate a greenhouse, you have probably heard of one of Michigan State University's timely information resources -- the MSU Extension Crop Advisory Team Alerts or "CAT" alerts for short.

The CAT Alerts are a timely source of pest and production information provided during the growing season. They are especially timely if accessed through the web at www.ipm.msu.edu.

In general, each week during the growing season (exact timing varies with the crop covered), Extension field staff and faculty from all over the state meet on a conference call. This allows everyone to know the status of crop development and pest outbreaks. From the information supplied in that call, faculty write advice-giving articles, while agents write regional reports.

Most CAT Alerts, depending upon the crop covered contain immediate and long-term pest management tactics, fertilizer recommendations, and pesticide regulation issues. Another useful part of the CAT Alerts is the climatic data, including growing degree-days and precipitation totals.

As mentioned earlier, the quickest method of getting the information is for you to visit the CAT Alert web site at www.ipm.msu.edu. They are usually posted by 3:00 p.m. on the day of the conference call. If desired, you can sign up to have an email sent to you when it is posted. You could also have the information mailed to you through a subscription, but there is usually a minimum of a two-day delay before you actually get the information.

CAT alerts clearly provide you with the right information at the right time. For more information on how to get these CAT Alerts, give me a call at 944-4126.

That is all for today, this has been Al Gaus for Berrien County Michigan State University Extension.