

## **WSJM May 24, 2006 – 2,4-D Ester Herbicide**

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

A common and useful herbicide used for controlling broad-leafed weeds is 2,4-D. It is commonly used to control weeds in lawns and pastures because it does not harm grasses. However, many people are not aware that there are restrictions on the use of 2,4-D in Berrien and other Southwest Michigan counties. This is because grapes, a major fruit crop with over 7000 acres in Berrien County alone, are very sensitive to 2,4-D. 2,4-D distorts grape leaves and shoots and can stop the growth and ripening of the grape berries. The Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) issues an order every year restricting the use of 2,4-D and a related herbicide MCPA to the amine form only in parts of Berrien, Cass, Kalamazoo and Van Buren counties. 2,4-D is available in two forms an ester and an amine form. The ester form of 2,4-D essentially evaporates when exposed to warm temperatures and can move miles away from the site of application on the wind. Unless you want to pay for part of your neighbor's grape crop and perhaps a fine for the misuse of pesticides, please be careful when selecting 2,4-D as to the formulation you purchase. With the increase of houses in rural areas, the new property owners are unaware of the restrictions on this pesticide and often apply it at the wrong time. Grape growers should be proactive and inform your neighbors before the damage occurs.

Remember, when you use pesticides, it is your responsibility to reduce drift and off site damage. This is almost impossible with the ester form of 2,4-D because of its tendency to form a gas and drift off site. Warm conditions increase the likelihood of volatilization and damage to grapes and other plants.

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