

Early apple tree bloom record set

By DAN WHEAT
Capital Press

WENATCHEE, Wash. — A new record has been set in Wenatchee apple lore.

Red Delicious apple trees reached full bloom April 9, two days earlier and 81 years later than the previous record of April 11, 1934.

"This is full bloom today. It clearly beat the old record," said Tim Smith, Washington State University Extension tree fruit specialist emeritus.

He was verifying computer modeling of blossom degrees by examining king blossoms on three Red Delicious trees at the WSU Tree Fruit Research and Extension Center in Wenatchee.

"It's the moderate temperatures in late winter that wake the tree up. Over 50 degrees is especially important," he said.

Early bloom means longer susceptibility to crop-damaging frosts and freezes. While freezing temperatures have been reached several mornings, Smith said he hasn't hear of any damage.

Fans and water have been used to protect against frost some mornings but there's been no significant damage from Pasco to Mattawa, said David Douglas, president of Douglas Fruit Co., Pasco.

Growers may find more damage from last November's freeze that struck the hardest in The Dalles, Ore., Smith said.

The computer modeling is an accumulation of highs above 43 degrees since Jan. 1. Temperatures above 43 drive bloom.

But Smith verifies his computer modeling forecast and declares full bloom when 60 percent of king blossoms, the tip blossoms of clusters, on the north sides of the three trees are fully open.

Modeling began in the 1960s, but prior to that earlier Red Delicious trees on the same site were used to determine full bloom beginning in 1922.

It remains the standard by which growers estimate bloom of all varieties of fruit trees in the Wenatchee area and determine timing of pesticides, chemical thinning and placement of bee

hives for pollination.

Full bloom normally occurs about April 27. The latest was May 16, 1922.

WSU will launch a new tree fruit website soon that will give growers up-to-date modeling of bloom dates of many cultivars throughout the state.

As usual, bloom in the Tri-Cities is a couple of weeks ahead of Wenatchee, Smith said. Overall timing is compressed with recent cooling creating more overlap of cherry, pear and apple bloom than normal, he said.

March was the fifth record warm month in Washington out of the last nine months, said Nic Loyd, meteorologist at WSU AgWeatherNet in Prosser.

Several all-time March



Dan Wheat/Capital Press

Tim Smith, WSU Extension tree fruit specialist emeritus, finds new record early full bloom on a Red Delicious apple tree at the WSU Tree Fruit Research and Extension Center in Wenatchee, Wash., April 9. Bloom records at the site date back to 1922.

highs were set on March 27 including 80 degrees at Wapato and 72 at Pullman, he said.

A semi-permanent ridge of high pressure has persisted near

Washington like something from another world and the state's long-range outlook is favors warm and perhaps dry conditions into early 2016, he said.



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OREGON FFA MEMBERS GET NEW OFFICER TEAM



Back row: Joe Matteo, Luis Mendoza, Ricky Molitor. Front row: Addie Howell, Bailey Myers, Alyssa Smith.

SILVERTON, Ore. — Six students were recently elected by delegates from throughout Oregon to serve on the 2015-16 Oregon FFA Officer team.

- **Luis Mendoza** of Molalla, was elected president.
- **Addie Howell** of Jefferson will serve as vice president.
- **Joe Matteo** of Sutherlin was elected as secretary.
- **Alyssa Smith** of Elkton will serve as treasurer.
- **Ricky Molitor** of Madras was elected as reporter
- **Bailey Myers** of Nyssa will serve as sentinel.

Each year at the Oregon FFA Convention, six students are elected by delegates to represent the association as Oregon FFA officers.

State officers commit to a year of service to the Oregon FFA Association. Each travels thousands of miles to interact with business and industry leaders, thousands of FFA members and teachers, corporate sponsors, government and education officials, the general public and more. The team will lead personal growth and leadership training conferences for FFA members throughout the country and help set policies that will guide the future of FFA and promote agricultural literacy.

The Oregon FFA Association provides leadership, personal growth and career success training through agricultural education to 5,750 student members in grades 7 through 12 who belong to one of 102 local FFA chapters throughout Oregon.

The National FFA Organization is a national youth organization of 610,240 student members as part of 7,665 local FFA chapters in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

The FFA mission is to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education. The National FFA Organization operates under a federal charter granted by the 81st U.S. Congress and it is an integral part of public instruction in agriculture. The U.S. Department of Education provides leadership and helps set direction for FFA as a service to state and local agricultural education programs.

For more, visit the National FFA Organization online at <http://ffa.org/>, on Facebook, Twitter and the official National FFA Organization blog.

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