

Tech Tips – February 2023

13 Feb 2023

Tipping/thinning

From recent grower visits there has been good regrowth so far after pruning, especially where pruning took place before the end of the December. A number of Bay of Plenty growers pruned lighter this year and have had good corresponding regrowth. Branching from self-terminating shoots, especially in Eureka has also been very evident this year.



Typical regrowth in the Bay of Plenty

From a tipping perspective, generally now is a good time to stop tipping, except for the occasional very long shoot that has got away.

Once active vegetative growth has ceased, growers can then assess if any shoot thinning/removal is required, especially targeting the centre of the bush if too dense.

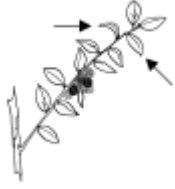
Leaf & nutrient solution testing

Now is an excellent time to assess the nutritional status of plants to ensure they are receiving optimum nutrition. This is achieved through leaf testing as well as testing the nutrient solution of the 'drip and drain'. Media or soil sampling is also an option to help give a complete picture of nutrient dynamics.

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Note, if you require sampling bags or containers and postage paid return courier bags, please contact Hill Labs (0508 44 555 22) and they will send them free of charge, or you can source them from BerryCo.

For **leaf testing**, follow these guidelines:



Sample the youngest mature leaf (blade & petiole) and take 5 representative leaves from each of 10 plants (minimum 50 leaves total). Ideally individual varieties should be sampled separately, but if these are in the same irrigation zone then at a minimum take the number of leaves proportional to the varieties present (e.g. 2/3rds of leaves from Eureka and 1/3rd of leaves from First Blush).

In the BerryCo Hill Labs Analysis Request (Quote 85273, [click here](#) for form), specify '**LEAF Blueberry (P44)**' as the test required and ensure all samples are labelled clearly.

For **nutrient solution testing**, follow these guidelines:

- Rinse a clean container (250 ml capacity) at least twice with the solution to be submitted.
- Fill the container to within 2 cm of the top and seal.
- In the BerryCo Hill Labs Analysis Request (Quote 85273, [click here](#) for form), specify '**NFT General, Solution (N1)**' as the test required and ensure all samples are labelled clearly.
- Send sample with the Analysis Request form as soon as possible after collection.

Fertigation/Irrigation management

Growers should now have changed to the Vegetative Fertigation mix (available [here](#)). Current Ideal drip/feed targets for EC and pH are approx. 0.8-1 EC and 5-5.5 pH, with drain targets approx. < 2 EC and 3-4 pH.

Daily drip/drain monitoring is also essential to ensure optimum irrigation and a healthy root zone, and a current approx target of 15-20% runoff is ideal.

Now is also a good time to consider applying **Hydraflo L**, a liquid soil wetting agent which helps to eliminate localised dry spots and increases the uniformity of wetting throughout the media profile ([click here](#) for more info).

Crop protection

Given the recent weather, keep a vigilant watch for any signs of rust, especially if a rust preventative fungicide has not been applied recently. Treat early if symptoms exist.

Similarly, now is a typical time for higher pest numbers such as aphids, thrips, and leafroller.

Please note the BerryCo crop protection options for [Fungicides](#) and [Pesticides](#) and contact the BerryCo Technical Team for more information on these products.