

Crain Walnut Shelling, Inc.

2010 CALIFORNIA ENGLISH WALNUT CROP Bloom Development and Update

CY 2010 Edition 1.

April 6, 2010
Los Molinos, California

TO: All Forward Sales Staff, Customers and Friends

Blooming of the 2010 California English Walnut crop, which traditionally takes place between March 20th and May 7th, is just getting started. Each variety generally pollinates over about a 2 week period, but under stress, trees will sometimes bloom longer, up to three weeks. Walnuts are considered self pollinating, and require some wind movement to spread the pollen to female blooms. As a result, some cross pollination from neighboring trees is needed to maximize crop set. With about 35 commercial varieties in California, there is a significant overlap of varieties in most regions during the bloom period.

Although we are still seeing significant intermittent rainfall in most growing regions, the lower temperatures have been favorable for growers keeping walnut bacterial blight risk to a minimum. Contrary to earlier thinking, recent studies have proven that some rain during bloom is actually beneficial to the crop set.

At this time, the early shelling varieties consisting of Payne, Ashley and Serr are nearing full bloom, while the middle season varieties of Vina, Tehama and Tulare are nearing 50% bloom. Hartley, Chandler and Howard varieties are just starting to push terminal bud shoots and will be starting to pollinate late this week or early next week.

Bloom timing is compressed this year into a short bloom period due to the cool weather in February and March, and this should allow for good overlap of the male and female bloom. Short bloom periods normally result in fewer smaller sized nuts than when we have a long drawn out bloom which can be as long as 20 days. Normally the earliest nuts to pollinate are the Jumbo sized nuts and the later pollinating nuts are smaller in size.

If you have any questions, please give us a call.

Sincerely,

Chuck Crain



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