

# What Eastern Tree Fruit Growers Told Us About Their Biggest Pest Challenges

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In a multistate focus-group assessment involving 82 eastern U.S. tree fruit growers, participants consistently identified codling moth, San Jose scale, and plum curculio among their most important insect pest concerns. Growers also highlighted challenges related to insecticide resistance, invasive species, and the need for more reliable decision-support tools. Importantly, participants expressed strong interest in improved alternatives to conventional insecticide-based management, including mating disruption, biological control, and enhanced monitoring systems.

The study also found that growers prefer receiving IPM information through a mix of formats, including email newsletters, videos, online resources, and in-person meetings—reinforcing the importance of multiple Extension communication channels.

This study is part of a broader multistate 4-year USDA-funded initiative bringing together researchers, Extension specialists, and growers across the eastern United States to improve IPM for key tree fruit pests. The

overarching goal is to develop practical, science-based management tools that reduce pest pressure while supporting economically and environmentally sustainable fruit production.

**Read the full article here:** Ajiferuke, O.E., Lamm, A.J., Lee, C.-L., Byrd, A.R., Piñero, J.C., DiGiacomo, G., Blaauw, B.R., Rivera, M.J., Wilson, J.K., Guedot, C., Schoof, S.C., Biddinger, D.J., Krawczyk, G., Walgenbach, J.F., Nielsen, A.L., Shapiro-Ilan, D.I., and Leskey, T.C. 2026. [\*Assessing eastern US tree fruit growers' pest issues, practices, and preferences to inform effective IPM communication\*](#). *Journal of Integrated Pest Management* 17: pmag010.

