Seasonably cool dry weather accompanied by bright sunny skies has characterized conditions in SW Florida over the past two weeks. Daytime temperatures, recorded at the FAWN weather station in Immokalee, have fluctuated between the upper 70’s to low 80’s, while nighttime readings have varied between the lower to mid 50’s to the mid to upper 60’s. No rainfall has been recorded in the last 14 days, although a few mornings earlier this week saw foggy conditions in some areas. Winds have been brisk on a number a days with a steady northeasterly breeze of between 8 – 14 mph prevailing many afternoons. The strong winds have caused some wind burning, particularly on cucurbits. Over all we have had close to ideal growing conditions over the past two weeks. The five day forecast calls for more of the same with a slight possibility of afternoon showers over the weekend.

Harvest of most crops is underway with tomatoes, peppers, beans, cucumbers, pickles, squash, and sweet corn now moving to market. Older plantings are looking fair to good. Pack out is still somewhat below normal, as a result of storm damaged crops still moving through the system although many growers are reporting that the harvest of fruit affected by Hurricane Irene is winding up. More recent plantings are looking good to excellent. Fruit set and sizing is good. Insect and disease pressure has been relatively light.

Bacterial leaf spot is still widely present in tomato and pepper. Most growers are reporting that the bacteria situation has been relatively stable over the last two weeks with little or no new lesions being noted. A few respondents, however, have noted some increase in bacterial leaf spot with new lesions being spotted on new growth in the last few days. It is thought that foggy mornings coupled with breezy conditions may be responsible for this new outbreak.

The incidence of tomato yellow leaf curl remains low. Most respondents are seeing only isolated occurrences of single infected plants here and there. These should be destroyed upon identification. Growers are advised to monitor whitefly populations, especially on older plantings where the efficacy of Admire applications may being to wear off. IGR’s and/or chemicals other than imidacloprid based compounds may be needed to ensure continued whitefly suppression as the season progresses.

Scattered reports of fusarium wilt on tomato have been noted. Incidence is low. There are also scattered reports of phytophthora in pepper, mainly in older plantings that where subject to wet conditions back in October.
Several respondents are reporting scattered low incidence of target spot in older plantings of tomato.

**Armyworm pressure** has picked up considerably over the past two weeks. Both beet and southern armyworms are being reported although beet armyworms seem to be more prevalent.

Scattered populations of broad mites continue to be present in pepper and eggplant. Minor pockets of infestation continue to develop. These seem to flare up following harvest and are probably being spread within fields by harvest labor.

All reports indicate that leafminer populations are slowly increasing. With few exceptions, most reports indicate that numbers continue to remain below actionable thresholds.

**Whiteflies** remain at generally low levels across the region. A few respondents have noted a slow but steady increase in populations in older plantings where Admire is losing it’s effectiveness, but report that applications of IGR’s, oils and poisons are holding numbers in check.

**Winged aphids** are widespread in pepper. Little colony formation has not been reported to date.

**Diamondback caterpillars** are beginning to show up on crucifers. Incidence is low and damage minimal.

Low levels of pepper weevils are being seen in number of locations. Most reports are of adults showing up in traps although a few respondents are reporting infested fruit; some with exit holes being observed.

**Thrips** numbers remain low. Most reports indicate that F. bispinosa are the predominant species being encountered.

**“Little leaf” Update.** A condition, currently being called “little leaf” (?) is being observed on tomato on widely scattered sites around Immokalee. Early symptoms of this condition are characterized by unusual growth consisting of interveinal chlorosis in young leaves. Subsequent growth becomes severely distorted with leaflets along the mid-rib failing to expand properly resulting in a “little leaf” appearance. In addition, leaflets are twisted and distorted. Overall the appearance is reminiscent of viral or phenoxy herbicide symptoms. This condition continues to be observed in a number of widely scattered locations.

The continued appearance of this condition is puzzling as “little leaf” is favored by wet saturated soils. In most places, soil moisture levels have returned to normal levels. Samples were taken from affected plants to determine if there is a viral or other pathogen involved. Results from these samples have been inconclusive and more samples have been sent off for diagnosis.

**Novartis** reports that FLINT, its new foliar fungicide, was approved on November 12\textsuperscript{th}, 1999 for use on cucurbits in Florida. FLINT is said to provide excellent control of powdery mildew at 1.5 to 2 ounces per acre as well as suppression of downy mildew.

The active ingredient in FLINT is trifloxystrobin. It has been designated as a “reduced risk” compound. FLINT possesses a unique activity that Novartis calls “mesostemic.” This means that the fungicide has a high affinity for the plant surface and is readily absorbed by the waxy layers of the plant. It has translaminar activity and also redistributes by superficial vapor action and redeposition.
FLINT fits well into IPM programs due to its low use rate, crop safety and the fact that it is harmless to a wide range of beneficial organisms. FLINT provides good resistance management potential and has no cross-resistance with fungicides of other chemical classes. Flint has a favorable human and environmental safety profile.

The FLINT label can be accessed at [http://www.cp.us.novartis.com/msds_general_frame.html](http://www.cp.us.novartis.com/msds_general_frame.html).

**Worker Protection Standard Update**

We have been notified, by the Bureau of Compliance Monitoring that the EPA has selected Florida for an audit of Worker Protection Standard enforcement. Immokalee, that is southwest Florida will be one of the first areas targeted. Joint inspections with state and federal WPS Compliance Monitoring inspectors will begin in December. Growers and other establishments subject to WPS regulation would be well advised to conduct a self-audit over the next few weeks. The Hendry County Extension Office has copies of the WPS inspection form if you would like one to help you evaluate your compliance level.

**Upcoming Meetings**

Dec 9, 1999*  
**Vegetable Field Day and Growers Meeting – 10 AM - 3 PM**  
SW Florida Research and Education Center  
Hwy 29 N, Immokalee, Florida  
Contact: Sheila Griffith @ 941-674-4092  
*Note – This meeting was erroneously reported as being scheduled for Dec 10, in the Sept – Oct SW Florida Vegetable Newsletter.

Dec 15, 1999  
**FARM-A-SYST – 1 PM – 3PM**  
SW Florida Research and Education Center  
Hwy 29 N, Immokalee, Florida  
Contact: Patrick Ludgate @ 941-338-3232

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The **SW Florida Pest and Disease Hotline** is compiled by Gene McAvoy and is issued on a biweekly basis by the Hendry County Cooperative Extension Office as a service to the vegetable industry.

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