

President's Message

Every year, the first week of April is an interesting time. It could be 75 degrees and sunny, 35 degrees and snowing, possibly even winds all over the place. The beginning of what is a long and hopefully successful season, and all of that before the first pitch is even thrown. Gotcha! You thought I was talking about fruit growing when I was really talking about opening week of the baseball season.

In all seriousness, it has been quite a spring thus far. By late March we expected to be in excellent position to finish pruning and start planting trees. Now, three weeks later, we still have half of our trees to plant. Also, with spraying, fertilizing, and the last of the pruning, it feels as though we still haven't caught up. Even as I type, I'm taking a break between cultipacking a field and moving the crew in to plant.

One of the many spring events that everyone is always curious about are the Penn State Twilight Meetings. While we will be unable to have them in person again, Penn State has scheduled an additional two virtual "twilight" meetings. I used quotes around "twilight" because Penn State will be trying something new this year. The virtual meetings will be held during the lunch hour. The content of the meetings will be the same as any other year with horticultural, disease, and insect updates, as well as pesticide credits. I would encourage all of you to register for the upcoming "twilight" meetings as they can contain some of the timeliest information available on all growing aspects. See page 14 for details.

While we all want to get each year off to the best start possible, just keep in mind that much like baseball, it's a long (sometimes grueling) season. Hopefully with a lucky bounce, I can even keep these next rows straight.

Ben Keim
SHAP President