President’s Message

Well, peach season is nearly upon us. As I sit down to write this, likely tomorrow we will start picking Rich May peaches. Overall, our trees are hanging with a nice peach crop. Like always, there are places I wish we had thinned a little harder, and others where I wish we had a few more on the tree, but we will make do. It’s always amazing how one day you go out and look at trees and there is just this dull green fruit, but the next time you look you find a beautiful red and yellow peach. Despite not receiving rain for most of April and May, that streak seems to have been broken—at least in Berks County—in June. I know when we finally received some rain, it could not have come at a better time. Talking to others though, I have heard that some have yet to see the rain, and others have gotten the unwelcome inclusion of hail with their rain. It is always astounding how one location can receive great weather, and right next door the worst.

The next major project is hand thinning on apples. Chemical thinning seems to have had interesting results this year. Varieties I thought I had not taken enough off now seem to still be dropping apples and will wind up just about perfect, whereas others just never seemed to drop the small stuff. Overall, we will have thinning to do, but not an unreasonable amount. While I hate hand thinning, I think I would rather do that than look at another year where it’s unnecessary due to a poor crop. Apple harvest is always the one I look forward to for the year, as while it can be chaos, it also marks the beginning of the wrap-up for the year.

As usual, this is a slow time of the year for events and SHAP related news as all of us are gearing up for harvest. I will end this message wishing everyone a safe and productive 2023 harvest season!

Andrew Schwalm

SHAP President