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Mint Dr ps

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UPCOMING EVENTS

June 5, 2007: Washington Mint Growers Field Day & Barbecue. The tour begins at 4:00 pm at the WSU Prosser research facility - the dinner to follow. For more information please contact the WMC office at 509-585-5460

December 4, 2007: Washington Mint Convention, The Red Lion Hotel in Pasco, WA. For more information please call the Washington Mint Growers Association Office at 509-585-5460.

January 10 & 11, 2008: Oregon Mint Convention, The Salishan Lodge and Golf Resort in Gleneden Beach, OR. For more information please contact Kari or Sue at the Association office at 503-364-2944.

January 23 & 24, 2008: MIRC annual meeting, The Monte Carlo in Las Vegas, NV. For more information please contact the MIRC office at 509-585-5460.

Integrated Weed Management in Mint

Rick Boydston, USDA-ARS

Weeds lower mint oil quality and quantity and should be managed to maximize profits. Integrated weed management includes the use of cultural practices and other methods, such as herbicides. Planting healthy mint rhizomes free of weeds, insects, nematodes, and plant pathogens, and maintaining a healthy crop are the cornerstones of managing weeds in mint. Mint breaks dormancy in March and early April and a healthy mint stand can shade and suppress many small summer annual weed seedlings. Most weeds establish in open areas where light, water, and sunlight are abundant due to missing, weak, or diseased mint plants. Maintaining a healthy mint stand involves controlling other pests (nematodes, insects, and diseases), maintaining proper fertility and maintaining adequate soil moisture.

Preemergence herbicides (Chateau, Command, Devrinol, Goal, Prowl H2O, Sinbar, Spartan, Treflan) should be applied at least several weeks prior to the breaking of mint dormancy to avoid herbicide injury and stunting of new mint growth in the spring. Nearly all the preemergence herbicides labeled for use in mint control weeds without significantly injuring the mint, in part, due to the mint being dormant during the application. If mint is starting to break dormancy when preemergence herbicides are applied, more injury can be expected. Since winter annual weeds often germinate in fall or early spring prior to mint regrowth, Gramoxone should be included with preemergence herbicides to help kill any existing weeds.

A limited number of postemergence applied herbicides are labeled for use in mint. Several effective postemergence herbicides are available for grass control including Select, Assure II, and Poast. Grass weeds should be actively growing and not water stressed when applying these herbicides for maximum herbicide uptake and control. Always use adjuvants recommended on grass herbicide labels to maximize control.

Postemergence broadleaf weed control in mint is more difficult and only Basagran, Buctril, Stinger, and Sinbar are labeled for postemergence broadleaf weed control. Basagran and Buctril inhibit photosynthesis and are not translocated extensively within the plant. These herbicides work best on small weeds under 2 inches tall and both herbicides have very limited soil activity. Buctril can cause injury to mint if applied when temperatures are warmer, whereas Basagran requires warmer temperatures for maximum weed control. A crop oil concentrate should be included with Basagran applications. Sinbar has some postemergence activity on small weeds and is taken up by both roots and foliage of weeds. Tank mixing Sinbar with other postemergence herbicides can provide extended weed control due to the preemergence soil activity of Sinbar.

Stinger is also labeled for postemergence use in mint for control of certain weeds in the composite (Canada thistle, salsify, prickly lettuce), Solanaceae (nightshades), and legume (clovers, medics) families. Stinger residues can persist in mint hay and spent hay should not be spread onto fields to be planted to peas, beans, potatoes, sunflowers or other sensitive crops.