

Orchard Outlook



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Honeycrisp Fruit Maturity is Early

The harvest window is early this year, and there are reports that Honeycrisp fruit maturity is advancing quickly. Figures 1 and 2 (on the next page) show that a sample of Honeycrisp fruit from Rockland are over-mature. Due to the unexpected rapid onset of maturity this year, Honeycrisp maturity should be monitored closely by considering taste, presence of starch, colour coverage, and DA meter readings. Growers may consider picking more with their first pick than what is typical of Honeycrisp.

It has been noted that red colour development is good this year but warm evenings have hastened maturity without further reddening. Waiting for redder colour may be delaying the harvest of mature fruit. Consider the red colour requirement that you need to meet while being prepared to harvest sooner than you anticipated, and perhaps with less colour than what is typical in NS.

Honeycrisp apples harvested at optimum maturity can be stored, and they are less likely to develop storage disorders compared with over-mature apples. Once the fruit are over-mature, they are acceptable to harvest and market immediately, and storage is not recommended.

Fruit maturity can vary throughout the valley and may be more advanced in some regions. Rely on observations of fruit maturity in your region for when to begin harvesting Honeycrisp, keeping in mind that maturity is accelerated throughout the valley.

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Figure 1. Honeycrisp fruit treated with iodine solution to stain starch black. The fruit in this photo have minimal staining because the starch has been converted to sugars, meaning the fruit are over-mature. Photo was taken Monday September 25th in Rockland.

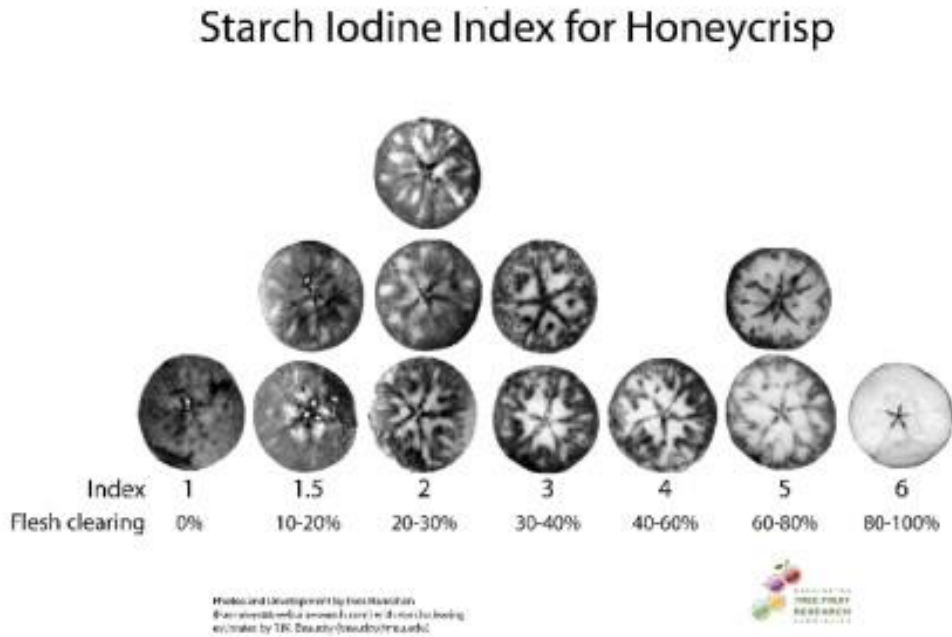


Figure 2. Typically Honeycrisp fruit acceptable for storage will stain between indexes 3-5.