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## Cultivar and tree training system impact on the content of mineral nutrient elements in the leaves under intensive apple production

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### SUMMARY

Today, it is generally agreed that the economic efficiency of fruit growing can be improved solely by its intensification.

The aim of the present study was to

- assess the cultivar and tree training
- system impact on the content of mineral
- nutrient elements in the leaves of apple
- trees. The study is a part of a larger
- investigation carried out at the Fruit-
- Growing Institute – Plovdiv. Subject of
- investigation were ‘Granny Smith’,
- ‘Braeburn’ and ‘Cooper 4’ cultivars trained
- to three different systems: ‘Slender
- Spindle’, ‘Solen’ and ‘Vertical Axis’. Trees
- were supplied with water and fertilizers
- through a drip irrigation system.

Leaf samples were collected once a year, at the beginning of August 2015 and 2016.

2015    2016  
P, K, Ca, Mg    Fe

According to the obtained results, the content of P, K, Ca, Mg and Fe was optimal in the three studied cultivars,

regardless of the applied training system. The only exception was reported for nitrogen, where apparently the application rate should be increased. The results gave the reason to conclude that fertigation is able to maintain constant and sufficient concentrations of N, P, K, Ca, Mg and Fe in the leaves, i.e. to provide optimal mineral nutrition to the apple trees.

**Key words:** 'GrannySmith', 'Braeburn', 'Cooper 4', 'SlenderSpindle', 'Solen', 'Vertical Axis'

**INTRODUCTION**

Historically, studies on fruit crop nutrition were the basis for developing strategies to overcome nutrient deficiency in plants. The reduction of spatial and temporal variation in nutritional status should be investigated in terms of the potential to improve total yield and fruit quality (Neilsenet al., 2010).

The content of mineral nutrient elements in the leaves was the subject of research studies of a wide range of authors. However, in this aspect priority was given to apple crop (Nurzynski et al., 1990). The method of foliar diagnostics was widely used to determine the nutrient reserve of fruit trees. As a diagnostic method, the leaf analysis is based on the dependence that exists between the nutrient content in the leaves, on the one hand, and the yield amount, on the other.

Leaf analysis, unlike soil analysis and visual diagnostics, allows the earlier detection of the risk of nutrient deficiency or surplus and timely action can be taken before the appearance of visual symptoms resulting from disturbances of the physiological processes and they are usually accompanied by a yield decrease (Stoilov, 1977; Semenyuk, 1983; Tsareva, 2005).

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There are many factors that affect the yield of apple trees. During the

vegetation season the trees absorb nutrients from the soil and from the reserves accumulated in the stem and shoots. According to apple trees pass through several stages during the vegetation season: 1. Use of the nutrient reserves; 2. Absorption of new nutrients from the soil; 3. Accumulation of the absorbed substances (Mochizuki and Hanada, 1956; Stojanowska, 1984). It is well known that the amount of yield depends on the nutrient content and the fertilizers applied to the soil (Stoilov et al., 1990). Microirrigation is an important part of the technology for growing intensive apple plantations. In addition to providing a favourable water regime for trees, microirrigation systems provide the opportunity to apply fertilizers with irrigation water (fertigation). The fertilizer rate is usually divided into parts in fertigation, which are precisely dosed in accordance with nutrient uptake by plants during the vegetation season (Haynes, 1985; Kafkafi and Tarchitzky, 2011).

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The subject of the present study was to investigate the effect of microirrigation and fertigation on the content of mineral nutrients in the leaves of three apple cultivars trained to three different systems and grown in an intensive plantation.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

The research was carried out in 2015 and 2016 in an intensive apple plantation, established in the spring of 2011 on the territory of the Fruit-Growing Institute in Plovdiv. Planting material of the cultivars 'Granny Smith', 'Braeburn' and 'Cooper 4' grafted on M 9 rootstock was used in the study. The three cultivars ripen at different periods. 'Braeburn' is an early one 'Cooper 4' is medium early and 'Granny Smith' is late. The soil is typical meadow-maroon, slightly sandy-clayey and neutral. The soil surface in the

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experimental plantation was maintained as black fallow. Three training systems have been studied: Slender Spindle, Solen and Vertical Axis.

In 2012 a drip irrigation system was constructed in the experimental plantation. The optimal irrigation regime was calculated on the basis of evaporation from the water surface, measured by a "Class A" evaporator. The reference evapotranspiration ( $ET_0$ ) was assumed to be equal to 80% of the evaporation values (Allen et al., 1998). After installing the drip system, the fertilizers were applied with the irrigation water (fertigation) by a constant dilution. Complex fertilizers from 'Kristalon' (YARA) series with different contents of macro and trace elements were applied (Table 1).

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### 1.

**Table 1. Fertilizer annual application rates and their monthly partitioning**

Nutrients	Application rates kg/ha	Application rate monthly partitioning				
		April %	May %	June %	July %	August %
2015 . – 7 " " YARA 2015 – 7 doses of "Kristalon" of YARA						
N	76.6			54,1	27.3	18.5
P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub>	34.9			33.8	61.6	4.6
K <sub>2</sub> O	41.7			68.1	22.8	9.1
MgO	6,6			66,6	24.2	9.2
2016 . – 7 " " YARA 2016 – 7 doses of "Kristalon" of YARA						
N	76.6			54.3	28.6	17.1
P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub>	39.8			29.6	61	9.4
K <sub>2</sub> O	53.9			52.7	29.9	17.4
MgO	8.4			52.4	31	16.6

The same fertilization practices were applied in all the variants. Leaf analysis was used to evaluate mineral nutrition of

the plants. The content of mineral nutrients in the leaves was determined once a year. The leaf samples were collected at the beginning of August, randomized from the middle part of the shoots. The leaf samples were analyzed by variants, as follows: the nitrogen content – by the distillation method, potassium – by flamephotometry, phosphorus – colorimetrically with reduction hydrazinesulfate, calcium and magnesium – complexometrically and iron – colorimetrically

K, Ca, Mg Fe  
2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

(2,2-2,5 %)

50%.

(0,18-0,4%) (Koumanov, 2008).

2016  
2015.

(1,1-1,6%).

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**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Data about the N, P, K, Ca, Mg, and Fe content in the leaves in the two vegetation seasons are presented in Figure 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. The mineral content in the leaves was above the lower limit of sufficient reserves, with the exception of nitrogen, in all the three studied cultivars, irrespective of the applied training system. In the two years of the study the nitrogen content was lower than the reference values (2.2-2.5%). The reason for the nitrogen deficiency was probably the entry of the plantation into a period of full fruiting and the relatively low fertilizer rate. That necessitated an increase of the basic nitrogen fertilizer rates in the next vegetation seasons by 50%.

The values of the phosphorus content were within the optimal limits (0.18-0.4%), (Koumanov, 2008). Differences were observed in the two years, the phosphorus content in 2016 being almost twice as high as in 2015. Comparing the different training systems, there were no differences, which gives the ground to conclude that the reasons for the reported differences were mostly due to climatic conditions.

The potassium values were also within the optimal limits (1.1-1.6%). However, there were differences between the cultivars. In 'Granny Smith' the potassium values were the lowest compared to 'Braeburn' and 'Cooper 4',

4,

probably due to the more vigorous vegetative growth, typical of that cultivar.

The calcium, magnesium, and iron contents of the leaves were optimal in the two years of the study.

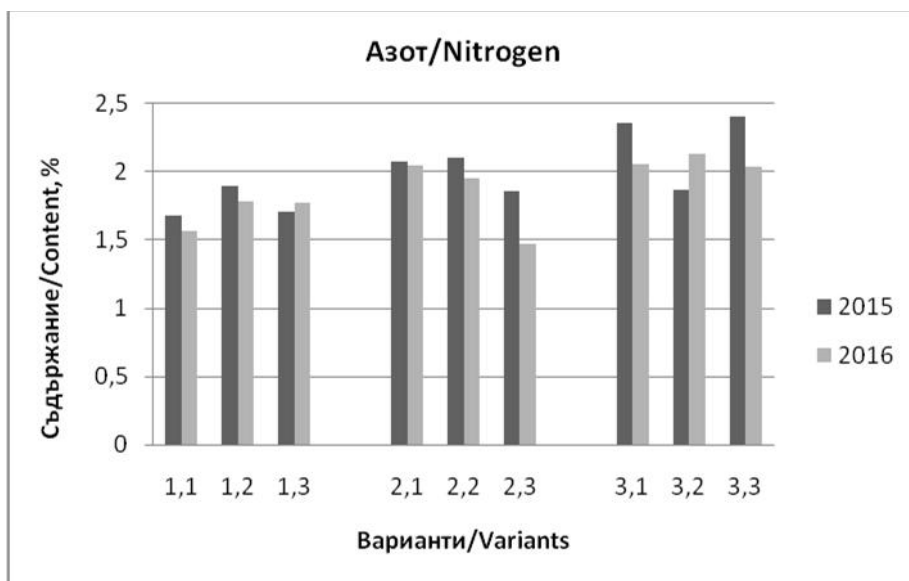


Fig. 1. Nitrogen content in the apple leaves of the varieties studied for 2015-2016, where 1.1. Granny Smith/Slender Spindle; 1.2 Granny Smith/Solen; 1.3 Granny Smith/ Vertical Axis; 2.1 Braeburn/Slender Spindle; 2.2 Braeburn/Solen; 2.3 Braeburn/Vertical Axis; 3.1 Cooper 4/Slender Spindle; 3.2 Cooper 4/Solen; 3.3 Cooper 4/Vertical Axis

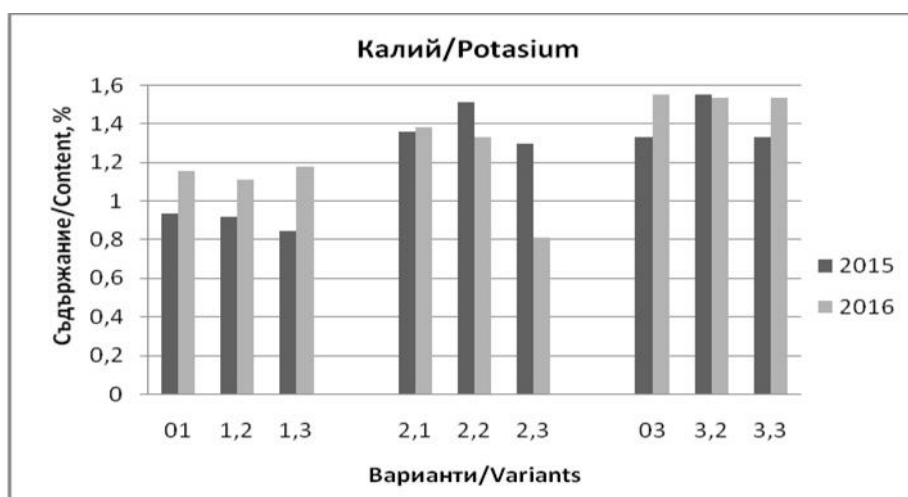


Fig. 2. Potassium content in the apple leaves of the varieties studied for 2015-2016, where 1.1. Granny Smith/Slender Spindle; 1.2 Granny Smith/Solen; 1.3 Granny Smith/Vertical Axis; 2.1 Braeburn/Slender Spindle; 2.2 Braeburn/Solen; 2.3 Braeburn/Vertical Axis; 3.1 Cooper 4/Slender Spindle; 3.2 Cooper 4/Solen; 3.3 Cooper 4/Vertical Axis

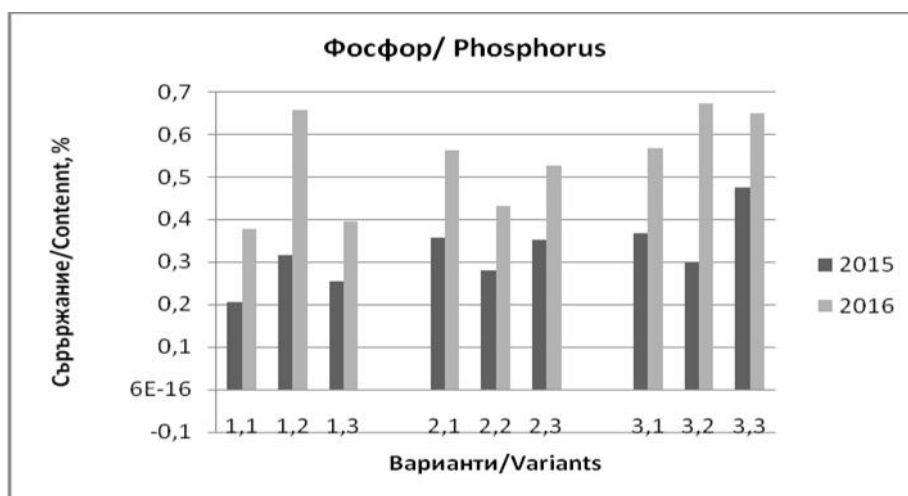
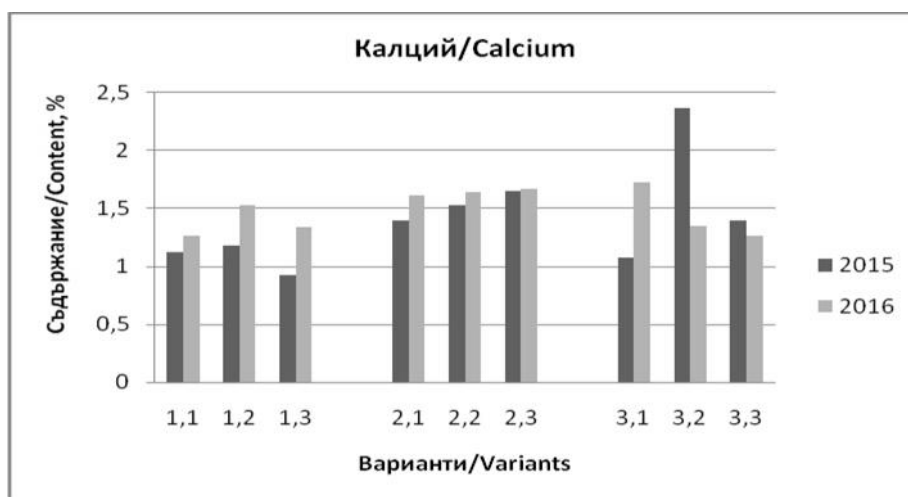
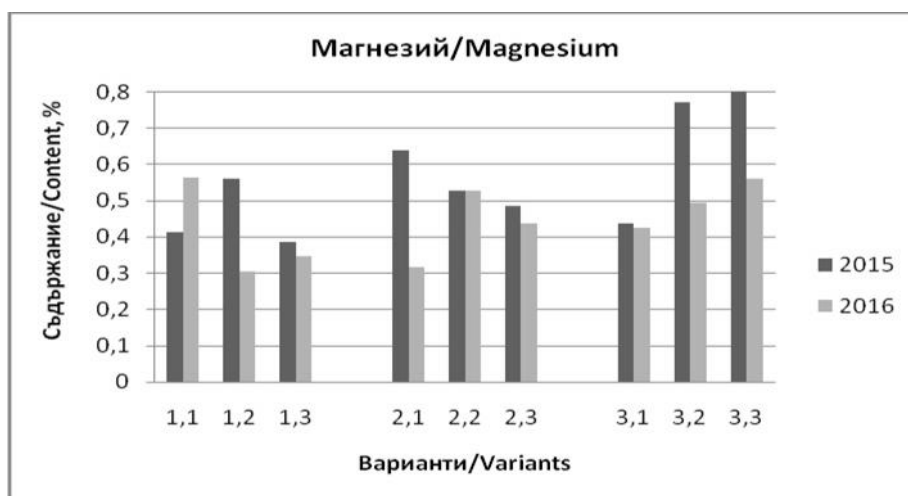


Fig. 3. Phosphorus content in the apple leaves of the varieties studied for 2015-2016, where 1.1. Granny Smith/ Slender Spindle; 1.2 Granny Smith/Solen; 1.3 Granny Smith/Vertical Axis; 2.1 Braeburn/Slender Spindle; 2.2 Braeburn/Solen; 2.3 Braeburn/Vertical Axis; 3.1 Cooper 4/Slender Spindle; 3.2 Cooper 4/Solen; 3.3 Cooper 4/Vertical Axis



4. 2015-2016 ., 1.1. / ; 1.2 / ; 1.3 / ; 2.1 / ; 2.2 / ; 2.3 / ; 3.1 4/ ; 3.2 4/ ; 3.3 4/

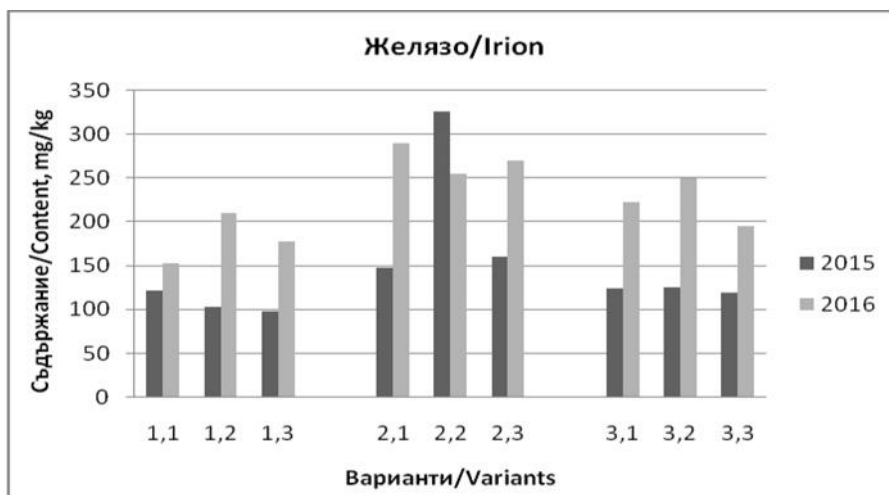
Fig. 4. Calcium content in the apple leaves of the varieties studied for 2015-2016, where 1.1. Granny Smith/Slender Spindle; 1.2 Granny Smith/Solen; 1.3 Granny Smith/Vertical Axis; 2.1 Braeburn/Slender Spindle; 2.2 Braeburn/Solen; 2.3 Braeburn/Vertical Axis; 3.1 Cooper 4/Slender Spindle; 3.2 Cooper 4/Solen; 3.3 Cooper 4/Vertical Axis



5. 2015-2016 ., 1.1. / ; 1.2 / ; 1.3 / ; 2.1 / ; 2.2 / ; 2.3 / ; 3.1 4/ ; 3.2 4/ ; 3.3 4/

Fig. 5. Magnesium content in the apple leaves of the varieties studied for 2015-2016, where 1.1. Granny Smith/Slender Spindle; 1.2 Granny Smith/Solen; 1.3 Granny Smith/Vertical Axis; 2.1 Braeburn/Slender Spindle; 2.2 Braeburn/Solen; 2.3 Braeburn/Vertical Axis; 3.1 Cooper 4/Slender Spindle; 3.2 Cooper 4/Solen; 3.3 Cooper 4/Vertical Axis





6. 2015-2016 гг. 1.1. / ; 1.2 / ; 1.3 / ; 2.1 / ; 2.2 / ; 2.3 / ; 3.1 4/ ; 3.2 4/ ; 3.3 4/

Fig. 6. Iron content in the apple leaves of the varieties studied for 2015-2016, where 1.1. Granny Smith/Slender Spindle; 1.2 Granny Smith/Solen; 1.3 Granny Smith/Vertical Axis; 2.1 Braeburn/Slender Spindle; 2.2 Braeburn/Solen; 2.3 Braeburn/Vertical Axis; 3.1 Cooper 4/Slender Spindle; 3.2 Cooper 4/Solen; 3.3 Cooper 4/Vertical Axis

## CONCLUSIONS

- The different variants of training the apple trees (Slender Spindle, Solen and Vertical Axis) do not have an effect on the content of mineral nutrients in the leaves of the studied apple cultivars. The cultivar has the greatest effect on the content of mineral elements.

The fertilization rate should be established based on the tree age, density and the biological characteristics of the cultivar.

- Drip irrigation and fertigation are a prerequisite and a guarantee for successful fruit production.

When properly applied, fertigation is able to maintain stable and sufficient concentrations of N, P, K, Ca, Mg and Fe in the leaves, i.e. to provide optimal mineral nutrition to apple plants.

N, P, K, Ca, Mg Fe

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## Effect of some soil herbicides on the vegetative habits of peach seedling rootstocks in a nursery

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### SUMMARY

The study on the effect of applying the combined soil-applied herbicide Metofen (metolachlor + oxyfluorfen) and the contact soil herbicide with foliar activity Pledge 50 WP (flumioxazine) on the vegetative habits of peach seedling rootstocks was carried out in the period 2010-2012 at the Fruit-Growing Institute - Plovdiv in a nursery first year. The soil herbicides were applied in the period 15-25 March, before beginning of vegetation.

The following variants were included in the study: 1. Control (untreated, hand-weeded); 2. Metofen – 120 ml/da; 3. Metofen – 240 ml/da; 4. Pledge 50 WP – 8.0 g/da; 5. Pledge 50 WP – 20.0 g/da.

The results showed that the soil herbicides included in the study, provided a full control of weed infestation at the applied rates. The efficient herbicide post-effect lasted for 3,5-4 months. No visual symptoms of phytotoxicity were observed in the peach rootstocks treated with herbicides. The results showed higher values of plant height and thickness in the

area of grafting in the herbicide treated variants compared to the control.

**Key words:** peach seedlings, herbicides, phytotoxicity, vegetative habits, weeds

## INTRODUCTION

Control of weed vegetation is a serious agrotechnical problem in fruit tree nurseries. Weeds have a strong suppressing effect on rootstock and scion development in production of planting material. The direct negative impact of weed infestation (weed-cultivated crop competition for moisture, light and nutrients from soil and fertilizers) is particularly strong. Under the influence of weeds, growth and development of the young trees is delayed, wood does not mature and the obtained planting material is of low quality. The indirect impact of weed infestation, such as the occurrence of pests and diseases, including viral ones, is strongly expressed in that case, taking into account modern issues in the production of certified, virus-free fruit planting material.

There are data in literature about the different effect of a number of soil and foliar herbicides on growth of peach seedlings, used as rootstocks – from a total lack of phytotoxicity and the production of good quality planting material to very strong phytotoxicity after applying some active substances contained in the herbicides, leading to dying of the trees (Altland et al., 2003; Rankova, 2004; Altland, 2005; Hanson and Schneider, 2008; Rankova, 2011; Rankova and Tityanov, 2013; Rankova and Tityanov, 2014).

In a study about the effect of the herbicides Pledge 50 WP and Metofen on the vegetative habits of almond seedling rootstocks in the nursery during the first year, it was established that the depressing effect of the active substances was obviously expressed in relation to plant height and comparatively less

(Altland et al., 2003; Rankova, 2004; Altland 2005; Hanson and Schneider, 2008; Rankova, 2011; Rankova and Tityanov, 2013; Rankova and Tityanov, 2014).

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and Tityanov, 2014).  
 Me - 240 ml/da  
 50 WP- 8.0 20.0 g/da,  
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 35-45  
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 Me - 120 ml/da 50 -  
 8,0 g/da  
 .  
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 s-  
 (Rankova, 2002;  
 Rankova, 2004).

expressed in relation to thickness at the place of grafting (Rankova and Tityanov, 2014). After treatment with high rates of Metofen – 240 ml/da and Pledge 50 WP 8.0 and 20.0 g/da, symptoms of phytotoxicity were reported, expressed as necrosis and leaf withering. The symptoms of phytotoxicity caused by the herbicides were overcome about 35-45 days after seedling emergence. Application of Metofen – 120 ml/da and Pledge WP – 8,0 g/da immediately after sowing, before plant emergence, can be recommended in the production of almond seedling rootstocks. Treatment with higher rates of those active substances is risky for causing phytotoxicity, which is expressed in growth suppression. In similar studies on the effect of soil herbicides, it was established that the active substance S-metolachlor had a depressing effect on the germination and growth of peach seedlings (Rankova, 2002; Rankova, 2004).

The aim of the present research was to study the effect of the soil-applied herbicides Metofen (metolachlor + oxyfluorfen) and Pledge 50 WP (flumioxazine) on growth habits of peach seedling rootstocks in a first-year nursery field.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

2010-2012 .  
 ( )  
 15-25  
 3-5cm  
 5-7cm.  
 +  
 ( ) ( 50  
 ),  
 : 1.  
 ( ); 2.  
 -120ml/da; 3.  
 240ml/da; 4. 50 - 8.0g/da; 5.  
 50 - 20.0g/da.

In the period 2010-2012 a study was carried out at the Fruit-Growing Institute - Plovdiv. Stratified seeds (stones) of peach were seeded at 3-5 cm depth at a 5-7 cm distance in the row, on an experimental plot in the period 15-25 March. Treatment with soil herbicides was applied immediately after sowing the seeds. The effect of the combined herbicide Metofen (metolachlor + oxyfluorfen) and of Pledge 50 WP (flumioxazine) was studied, each of the herbicides used at two different rates. The following variants were established: 1. Control (untreated, hand-weeded); 2. Metofen – 120 ml/da; 3. Metofen – 240 ml/da; 4. Pledge 50 WP – 8.0 g/da; 5. Pledge 50 WP – 20.0 g/da.

4  
30  
30  
(15-20)  
(cm)  
(mm)  
(*Veronica hederifolia* L.),  
(*Alopecurus myosuroides* L.),  
(*Senecio vulgaris* L.),  
(*Bromus arvensis* L.),  
(*Hordeum murinum* L.),  
(*Chenopodium album* L.),  
(*Amaranthus retroflexus* L.),  
(*Polygonum aviculare* L.),  
(*Portulaca oleracea* L.),  
(*Erigeron canadensis* L.) (Rankova and

The trial was established by the standard method of long rows, in four replicates. The control was maintained free of weeds by hand weeding every 30 days. During the vegetation period the rootstocks were grown following the standard technology.

The efficacy of the applied herbicides was evaluated using the quantity-weighing method, by reporting weed infestation in the separate variants during vegetation in dynamics, every 30<sup>th</sup> day after treatment, until the end of the herbicide post-effect.

During the vegetation period plant growth and development were followed out – emergence, external symptoms of toxicity (chlorosis, necrosis, growth suppression).

In August (15-20) the rootstocks were graded for quality by reporting the biometric characteristics plant height (cm) and thickness at the place of grafting (mm). Grading of plants in that period coincided with the time of grafting, determined as the most suitable in Bulgarian fruit-growing practice. The results obtained were processed by the dispersion analysis method.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

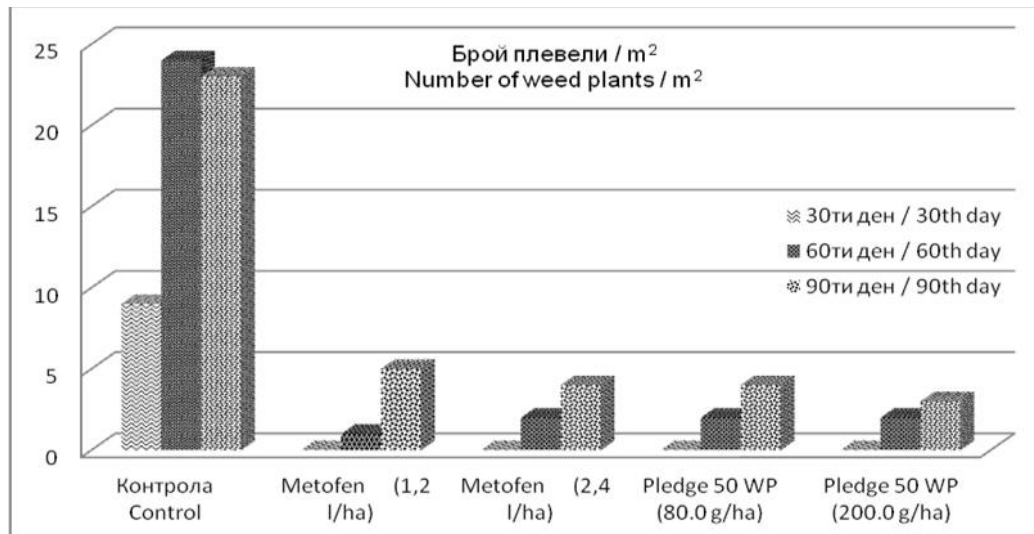
Weed association in the fruit tree nursery in the experimental fields of the Fruit-Growing Institute - Plovdiv is of the “arable type”, i.e. the annual early and late spring weed species being prevailing. The development of the following grassy weed species was established: ivy leaf speedwell (*Veronica hederifolia* L.), blackgrass (*Alopecurus myosuroides* L.), common groundsel (*Senecio vulgaris* L.), field brome (*Bromus arvensis* L.), wild barley (*Hordeum murinum* L.), white goosefoot (*Chenopodium album* L.), redroot pigweed (*Amaranthus retroflexus* L.), prostrate knotweed (*Polygonum aviculare* L.), purslane (*Portulaca oleracea* L.), horseweed (*Erigeron canadensis* L.), (Rankova and Tityanov,

Tityanov, 2013; Rankova and Tityanov, 2014).

2013; Rankova and Tityanov, 2014).

60- 90-  
e  
(*Alopecurus myosuroides*  
(*Bromus arvensis* L.)  
1).  
3,5-4  
120

During the first three months after applying the herbicides, the weeds available in the different variants, were reported by species and in number. On the 60<sup>th</sup> and 90<sup>th</sup> days single plants of the species *Alopecurus myosuroides* L. and *Bromus arvensis* L. were found in the variants treated with the herbicides (Figure 1). All the studied herbicides at the rates applied showed a good control of weed infestation and the post-effect lasted for about 3,5-4 months. The herbicide effect continued for about 120 days after treatment, i.e. until the beginning of August.



1.  
( / m²)

Fig. 1. Effect of the soil-applied herbicides on the level of weed infestation (number of weed plants / m²)

– (*Portulaca oleracea* L.)  
(*Erigeron canadensis* L.).

In the period when the efficient herbicide post-effect subsided, the major representatives in the weed association were the late spring species purslane (*Portulaca oleracea* L.) and horseweed (*Erigeron canadensis* L.).

The results obtained about the effect of the active substances applied at the studied rates, on the weed infestation level and the duration of the efficient herbicide post-effect showed that it is

possible to realize efficient weed control in the fruit tree nursery. The herbicides with a comparatively broad-spectrum of activity (controlling grassy and broad-leaved weed species) included in the study, contributed to the control of almost all the weed species in the weed association, which may develop in the fruit tree nursery.

The realization of a long-term herbicide effect, lasting for about 4 months after the herbicide application, provided favourable conditions for the development of the grafted plants, at the time when weed-cultural plant competition had the greatest suppressing effect.

No visual symptoms of phytotoxicity (chlorosis, necrosis) were observed in the peach rootstocks treated with herbicides (Figure 2). There were no differences in plant growth rates from treated variants and controls. This gives reason to assume that, compared to the other seedlings rootstocks included in the studies, the peach seedling rootstock exhibits very good tolerance to the herbicides at the administered doses.



2.  
( .5)

50

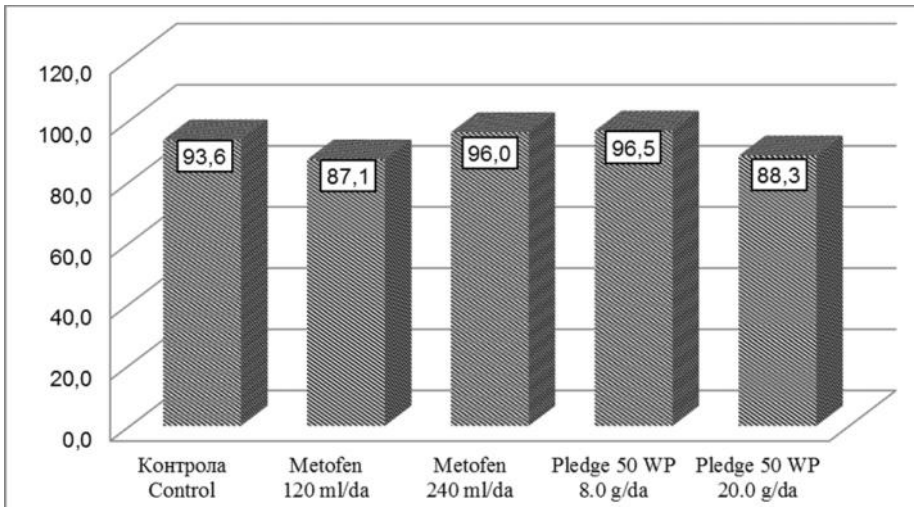
Fig. 2. Peach seedling rootstocks treated with a high rate of Pledge 50 WP (Var. 5)



ml/da 50 -8.0 g/da ( .3 4).  
 8,6-10,7 mm,  
 ( 4).  
 50 -8.0 g/da - 240  
 ml/da ( .4 3).

The biometric analysis results show the same tendency over the years of the study and they are presented as averages. Data show that the reported values of plant height in the herbicide-treated variants are close to or higher than those of the control (Figure 3). The largest values of plant height were established in the variants with Metofen treatment – 240 ml/da and Pledge 50 WP – 8.0 g/da (Var. 3 and 4).

Thickness at the place of grafting in plants of the herbicide-treated variants ranged within 8.6-10.7 mm, which makes them suitable for grafting in the year of sowing the seeds (Figure 4). The differences between the variants were not statistically significant. The highest values of the thickness at the grafting area were reported for the plants treated with Pledge 50 WP – 8.0 g/da and Metofen – 240 ml/da (Var. 4 and 3). This gave the reason to assume that the active substances included in the study do not have a depressing effect on the thickness of the peach rootstocks and their application allows the production of good quality planting material, suitable for grafting in the year of sowing the seeds.

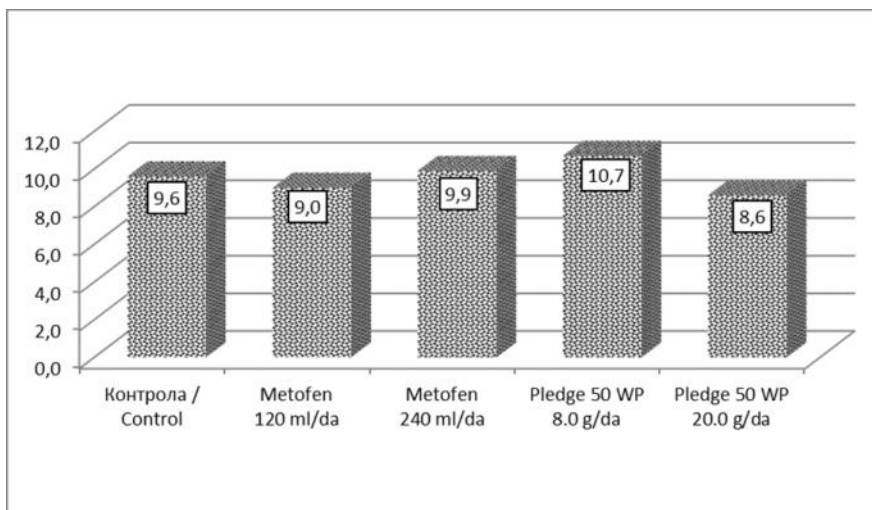


n.s.

. 3

(cm)

Fig. 3. Effect of soil herbicides on height of peach seedling rootstocks (cm)



n.s.

. 4.

(mm)

**Fig. 4. Effect of soil herbicides on thickness at the grafting area of peach seedling rootstocks (mm)**

## CONCLUSIONS

1. The applied higher rates of the herbicides in the first-year nursery field had better and continuous control of the weed vegetation.
2. Good herbicide efficacy on weed infestation was also observed when using the lower rates (Variants 2 and 4).
3. The soil herbicides included in the study and applied at the tested rates, provided complete weed control, the efficient herbicide effect lasting for 3.5-4 months.
4. Peach seedling rootstocks responded tolerantly to treatment with the active ingredients of the herbicides included in the study. Good quality rootstocks were obtained, suitable for grafting in the year of sowing the seeds. Plants in the variants treated with Metofen – 240 ml/da and Pledge 50 WP – 8.0g/ da had the highest biometric values, making these herbicides at the applied rates optimal for application in peach seedling rootstocks in a nursery for the first year.

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## Competition for mineral nutrients between cultural plants and weeds in a nursery

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### SUMMARY

The investigations were conducted during 2014 and 2015 with the vegetative cherry candidate rootstock 20-192 in one- and two-year old nursery at the Fruit Growing Institute - Plovdiv. The content of the major mineral elements in weed species, represented in the weed association of the nursery, as well as in the leaves of the rootstocks from all the variants (herbicide-treated and the untreated control) was observed during the vegetation season. The presence of the following weed species was detected: purslane (*Portulaca oleraceae*L.), crabgrass (*Digitariasanguinalis*L.), red root pigweed (*Amaranthus retroflexus*L.), green foxtail (*Setaria viridis*L.), common sowthistle (*Sonchus oleraceus*L.) and Bermuda grass (*Cynodon dactylon* L.). The separate weed species accumulated different rates of the mineral elements. The percentage of potassium, calcium and magnesium in some weed species was higher than that in the leaves of the cultural plants. The highest levels of potassium and magnesium were accumulated by purslane, almost twice higher than those in the other weed species.

**Key words:** weeds, nutrient elements, nursery

2014-2015 .

- 20-192

( ) .

(*Portulaca oleraceae* L.),  
(*Digitaria sanguinalis* L.),  
(*Amaranthus retroflexus* L.),  
(*Setaria viridis* L.),  
(*Sonchus oleraceus*L..)  
(*Cynodon dactylon* L).

100  
al., 2000),

(Appleby et

25  
(Agrow, 2003).

(Clarence J. Swanton et al., 2015).

( )

)  
(Qasem, 1992).

(Vengriset al.,1953; Alkamper,  
1976; Zimdahl, 1980; Kumar at al., 2013;

## INTRODUCTION

Global annual economic loss due to weed infestation in agricultural crops has been estimated at more than \$ 100 billion (Appleby et al., 2000), while global herbicide sales have been in the range of about \$ 25 billion (Agrow, 2003). Development of cost-effective and sustainable practices for weed control management is essential for better understanding of the relationship between agricultural crops and weeds. Studies on crop-weed competition in agrophytocenosis provide valuable information on the harm caused by weed infestation on yield quantity and quality and about the economic production efficiency (Clarence J. Swanton et al., 2015).

Along with the indirect damage caused by weed infestation (spread of diseases and pests), the direct harm caused by crop-weed competition for water and nutrients adversely affects the development of crop plants.

Weeds are good nutrient accumulators. In a number of weed species nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium and magnesium percentages in the foliage (stems and leaves) are higher than in crop plants (Qasem, 1992).

The weed vegetation strongly competes with the crop plants for moisture, nutrients, light and heat. Many weed species have a higher transpiration coefficient, a better developed root system and a better uptake than cultivated crops, thereby absorbing larger amounts of moisture and nutrients from soil.

Different studies have been conducted on comparing the uptake of nutrients by weeds and annual crop plants (Vengris et al., 1953; Alkamper, 1976; Zimdahl, 1980; Kumar et al., 2013; Kumar et al., 2015).

Kumar et al., 2015).

It was established that weeds absorb nutrients from soil much faster and in larger quantities than the crop species.

Weeds are one of the major limiting factors in modern fruit growing. Weed vegetation is also a major problem in fruit nurseries, due to the strong competition for water and nutrients. In cases of strong weed infestation, the growth of rootstocks and grafted plants is strongly inhibited and the produced planting material is of low quality.

The aim of the present study was to establish the content of major nutrients in the weed vegetation and in the cherry candidate rootstock 20-192, which is of poor growth vigour, in a first and second year nursery plantation.

20-192

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study was carried out in 2014-2015 in a one- and two-year old nursery with the candidate cherry vegetative rootstock 20-192 on the territory of the Fruit-Growing Institute - Plovdiv.

Hybrid No. 20-192 was established at the Fruit-Growing Institute - Plovdiv in result of the implemented programme for breeding rootstocks of poor growth vigour for sweet and sour cherry cultivars. It was obtained from crossing the low-vigour sour cherry cultivar 'Polevka' (*Prunuscer sus* L.) with pollen of the sweet cherry cultivar 'Compact Van' (*Prunusavium* L.). The source plant was a twenty-four year old tree with good vitality, grown under non-irrigation conditions and with outplant protection treatments, those facts showing its drought resistance and resistance to diseases and pests. It is 140 cm in height, with a semi-drooping crown habit. It is easily propagated under *invitro* conditions. In the nursery, the rootstocks reach the optimal thickness at the place of grafting in the first half of September. At present hybrid No. 20-192 has been studied in the nursery as a perspective one, characterized by its poor growth vigour, suitable for sweet and sour cherry cultivars (Zhivondov, 2012; Rankova

2014-2015

20-192

20-192

(*Prunusavium* L.).

" (*Prunuscer sus* L.)

140 cm

192

20-

(Zhivondov,

2012; Rankova et al., 2015).

20-192  
20-25  
15cm.  
33  
400 ml/da.

4  
30

:

20-192

“ ”

(*Amaranthus retroflexus* L.),  
(*Setaria viridis* L.),  
(*Portulaca oleracea* L.),  
(*Digitaria sanguinalis* L.),  
(*Sonchus oleraceus* L.)  
(*Cynodon dactylon* L.).

400 ml/da 33

et al., 2015).

Plants from the vegetative rootstock 20-192 were planted in the period 20-25 April in a nursery, at 15cm planting distance in the row. Immediately after planting treatment was performed with the soil herbicide pendimethalin, commercial product Stomp 33 EC, applied at a rate of 400 ml/da. The trial was set by the standard long row method, in 4 replications. The control was maintained free of weeds by manual weeding every 30<sup>th</sup> day. During vegetation the rootstocks were grown by the standard technology.

When reporting weed infestation, the weed species in the control and in the herbicide-treated variant were analyzed for the content of major nutrients: nitrogen – by distillation method, potassium – with a flame photometer, phosphorus – colorimetrically with reduction hydrazine sulphate, calcium and magnesium – by the complexometric method and iron – colorimetrically.

The content of the major nutrients in average leaf samples of the cherry vegetative rootstock 20-192 during the active vegetation was analyzed by an analogous method for determining the nutrient content.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Weed association in the fruit tree nursery in the experimental fields of the Fruit-Growing Institute - Plovdiv is of the arable type, i.e. with predominant annual early and late spring weed species. During the years of the study, the following annual weed species were found: redroot pigweed (*Amaranthus retroflexus* L.), green foxtail (*Setaria viridis* L.), purslane (*Portulaca oleraceae* L.), crabgrass (*Digitaria sanguinalis* L.), common sowthistle (*Sonchus oleraceus* L.) and the perennial species Bermuda grass (*Cynodon dactylon* L.).

The soil herbicide Stomp 33 EC at the applied rate of 400 ml/da showed very good herbicide efficacy on weed infestation,

3,5-4

120

L.).

(*Portulacaoleracea*

4

4,8-5,16%.

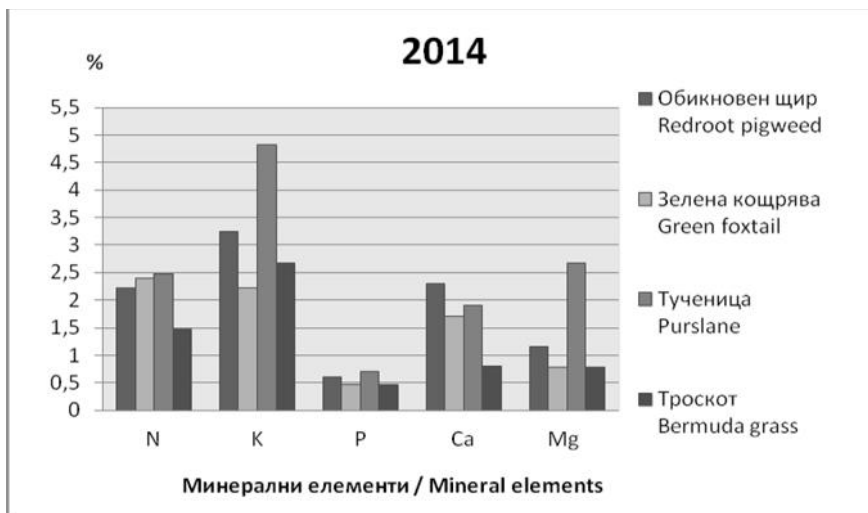
(

2,5-3,0%,

( 1 2).

the duration of herbicide activity continuing for 3.5-4 months. That made it possible to eliminate the competitive impact of weeds on the initial period of rootstock growth in the herbicide-treated variant. About 120 days after treatment, at the beginning of August, the herbicide effect subsided. Data reported at that time showed that only single purslane plants (*Portulacaoleracea* L.) were found. The realization of a continuous herbicide effect of about 4 months after treatment provided good conditions for rootstock development at the earliest stages of vegetation when crop-weed competition has the most suppressive effect.

The results obtained showed that the different weed species accumulated different amounts of nutrients. Compared to the other analyzed weed species, purslane was characterized by a very high potassium content of 4.8-5.16%. The rest of the weeds (redroot pigweed, Bermuda grass, green foxtail, crabgrass, common sowthistle) had an average potassium content of 2.5-3.0%, which was also higher in concentration compared to the content in crop plants (Figure1 and 2).



. 1.

, 2014 . (%)

Fig. 1. Content of major nutrient elements in the aboveground mass of weed species, 2014, (%)



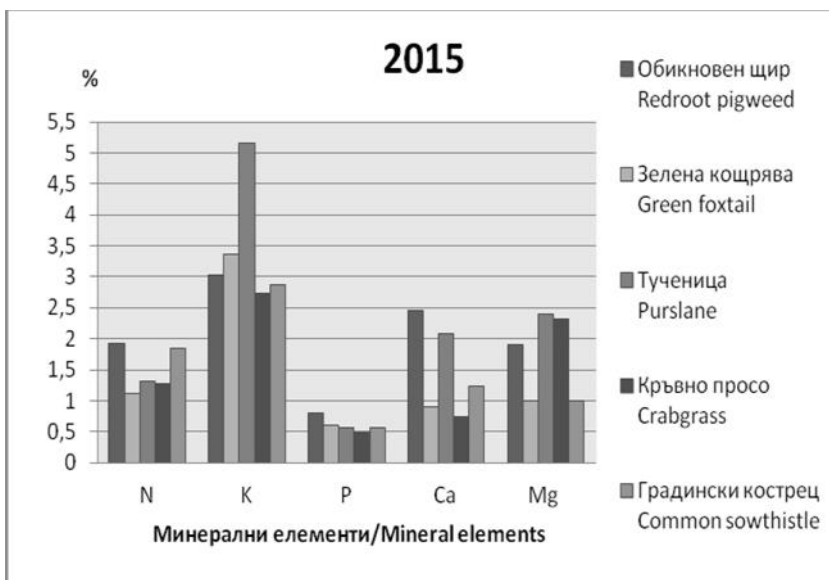
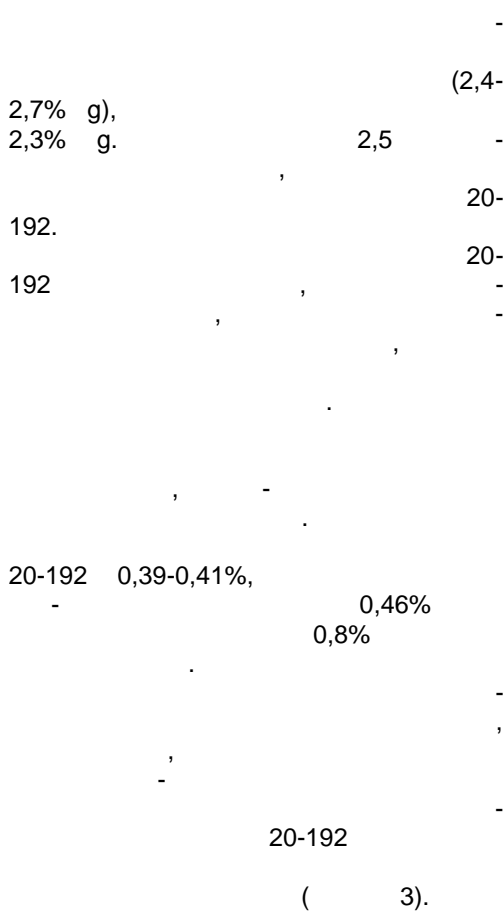


Fig. 2. Content of major nutrient elements in the aboveground mass of weed species, 2015, (%)

With respect to nitrogen, the content of this element in weed species was similar to that in the rootstock 20-192, both in the treated variant and in the control. That gives reason to assume that the presence of weed species in the plantation does not significantly affect the nitrogen content in the leaves of the crop plants.

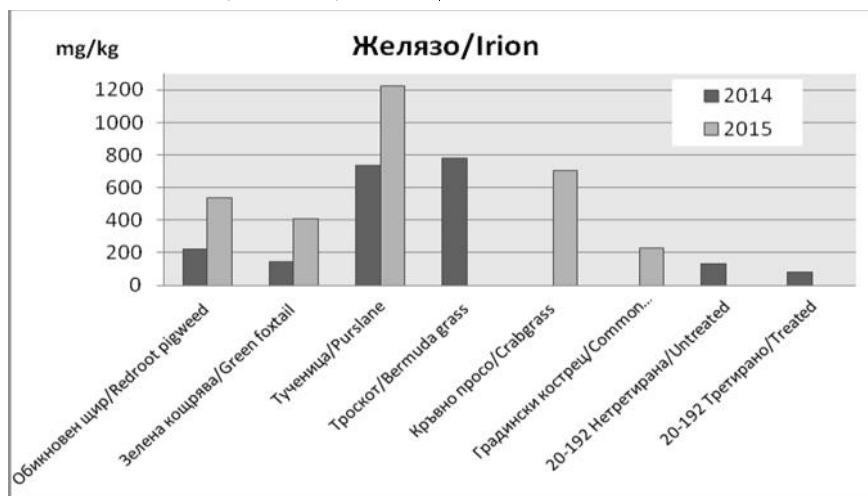
For the element calcium, there was a substantial difference in its content in the different weed species. Once again, the purslane and redroot pigweed were characterized by twice higher calcium content compared to the other studied weed species: (1.9-2.1% Ca) and (2.3-2.46% Ca), respectively. The calcium content in the perennial rhizome species Bermuda grass was 0.8%, in crabgrass 0.7% and in common sowthistle 1.2%. Comparing those results with the calcium content data in the leaves of the vegetative rootstock 20-192, it was established that its content was higher in the leaves of the weed species. It can be seen that the rootstocks contained lower values than purslane and redroot pigweed (Figure 1, 2 and 4).



Regarding the magnesium content, high values were found again in the purslane species (2.4-2.7% Mg), as well as in crabgrass (2.3% Mg). Those values were 2.5 times higher than the values recorded in the two variants for the vegetative rootstock 20-192. Comparing the results obtained for weed species and for the rootstock, it can be assumed that despite the high content of magnesium in weeds, the crop-weed competition does not significantly affect the magnesium content in the rootstock.

The phosphorus content in all the studied weed species was higher than in the rootstock. The phosphorus content in the rootstock 20-192 leaves was 0.39-0.41%, whereas the lowest value in the weeds was 0.46% in Bermuda grass, reaching up to 0.8% in redroot pigweed.

The content of iron in the studied weed species purslane, crabgrass, Bermuda grass and redroot pigweed was several times higher than in the leaves of the vegetative rootstock 20-192, this tendency being observed during the two years of the study (Figure 3).



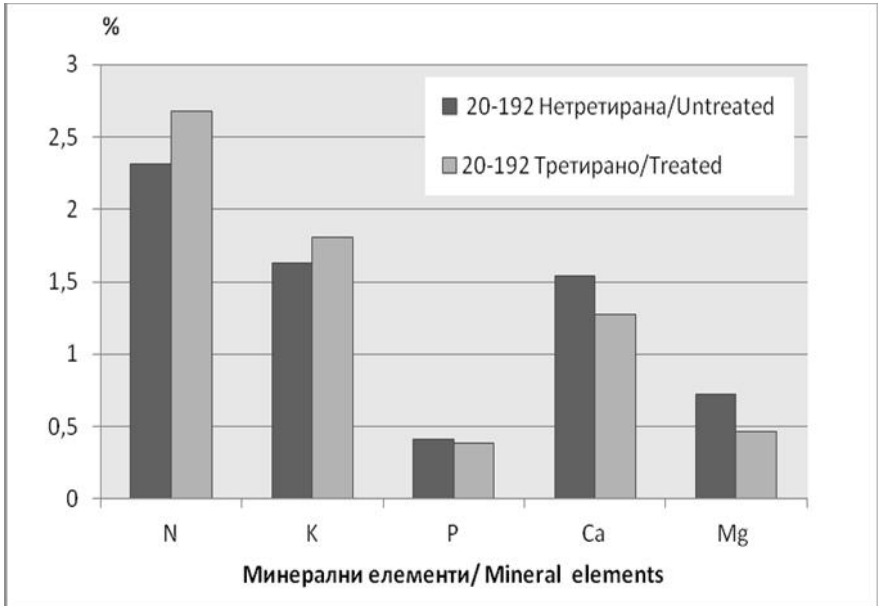
. 3.

20-192,2014-2015 . (mg/kg)

Fig. 3. Content of major nutrient elements in the aboveground mass of weed species and in the leaves of the vegetative rootstock 20-192, 2014-2015, (mg/kg)

20-192  
)  
(  
( 4).

Comparing the results obtained from the leaf sample analysis of the two variants with the vegetative rootstock 20-192, it became clear that the herbicide-treated (weed-free) variant showed higher values of the content of the nutrient elements nitrogen and potassium (Figure 4).



. 4.

20-192 , 2014-2015 . (%)

Fig. 4. Content of major nutrient elements in the leaves of the vegetative sweet cherry candidate rootstock 20-192, 2014-2015, (%).

### CONCLUSIONS

The results obtained about the content of the major nutrients in the studied weed species and the vegetative rootstock 20-192 give the grounds to draw the following conclusions:

- 1.
- 2.

1. Different weed species accumulate different contents of the separate nutrients.
2. Purslane species accumulates large amounts of potassium, which results in low values of that element in the crop plants in the weed-infested control. On the other hand, the high potassium, magnesium and iron content in purslane makes the weed suitable for plowing in,

3.

as a green manure and mulching.

- 3. Weeds absorb mineral nutrients faster than the crop plants and accumulate them in their tissues in relatively larger quantities. This confirms the need to control weed infestation especially at the earliest stages of rootstock development when their root system is less developed.
- 
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4.

- 4. Uptake of nutrients by weed vegetation leads to a huge loss of nutrient substances, often the amount absorbed being about twice larger than that absorbed by the crop plants.
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## **, *Aceria erinea* Nalepa (Acarina: Eriophyidae)**

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### **Susceptibility of some walnut cultivars to Persian walnut erineum mite, *Aceria erinea* Nalepa (Acarina: Eriophyidae)**

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#### **SUMMARY**

, *Aceria erinea* Nalepa (Acarina:  
Eriophyidae),

(*Juglans regia* L.).

14 (F), 2 (H) - 7 ( ), 2 (H) 3

*erinea*.

12-

-  
2014-2016

( ) .

(10 10 ) .

*Aceria erinea* Nalepa (Acarina:  
Eriophyidae) is a widespread species in  
the fauna of Bulgaria but rarely causes  
significant damage to the leaves of the  
Persian walnut (*Juglans regia* L.).

The aim of the present research is to  
study and compare the susceptibility of 14  
walnut cultivars - 7 Bulgarian (B), 2  
French (F), 2 Hungarian (H) and 3  
American (A) - to Persian walnut erineum  
mite, *A. erinea*. The study was conducted  
under natural environmental conditions in  
a 12-year-old walnut collection orchard  
garden of the Fruit Growing Institute -  
Plovdiv, during the period 2014-2016.

The evaluation of the attack produced by  
these mite species was carried out  
by taking leaf samples from walnut trees at  
two different times of the year (May and  
July). 100 leaves (10 leaves of 10 trees)  
were sampled at random per cultivar to  
detect the level of *A. erineae* infestation. The  
collected leaves were examined in the

*Aceria erineae*

McKinney

e

*Aceria erineae* Nal.

a

: *Juglans regia*,  
*Aceria erineae*,

laboratory for the presence of galls. Damaged leaves are divided into classes depending on the number of available galls. The tested cultivars were divided into 5 levels of susceptibility to *A. erineae* based on the calculated index of infestation by the formula of McKinney. This paper provides information about cultivar susceptibility of walnut trees to attack of Persian walnut erineum mite, *Aceria erineae* Nal.

**Key words:** *Juglans regia*, cultivar susceptibility, Persian walnut erineum mite, infestation

### INTRODUCTION

*Aceria*  
*erinea* (Nalepa, 1929) *Aceria tristriata*  
(Nalepa, 1929) (Acarina: Eriophyidae)

(*Juglans regia* L.) (Castagnoli and Oldfield, 1996).

*A. erineae*

(Natcheff, 1982a).

Persian walnut erineum mite, *Aceria erineae* (Nalepa, 1929) and *Aceria tristriata* (Nalepa, 1929) are considered to be one of the most important and most harmful species among all established eriophyid species found on the leaves of the Persian walnut (*Juglans regia* L.) (Castagnoli and Oldfield, 1996).

*A. erineae* is a long-known and widely spread phytophagous species of mite found in walnut trees in Bulgaria (Natcheff, 1982a). This mite species winters as a deutogine form in the buds of walnut trees. The overwintered individuals are activated at the beginning of the growing season. Initially, they suck the juice from the shells of the buds and then go to the lower surface of the leaves. The infestation caused by this mite is established as the appearance of

shiny, convex swellings (galls) on the upper surface of the leaf blade (Figure 1) and on the underside as patches of shallow, large, solitary concavities lined with felty, yellowish hairs (eryneum) (Figure 2), among which the mites are to be found. With the aging of the tissues, the mites leave the erineum, which gradually darkens and turns brown. In a strong attack, the whole leaf is covered with galls and deformed.

(Natcheff, 1982b).

Often galls have a purple-red hue. Galls are sometimes formed on the leaf handles. This attack has a strong negative impact on walnut trees, especially in young plants (Natcheff, 1982b). Heavily affected leaves significantly reduce the assimilation surface. Many of the attacked leaves are deformed, dry and prematurely dropped. At the end of summer and early autumn, females migrate from the erineum to the vegetative buds, where they remain to winter.

Among the many factors that have a significant impact on the spread of eriophyids, morphological and biochemical features of plants play an important role. These are the specific characteristics of individual cultivars, which determine whether they are suitable for the colonization, feeding and reproduction of the eriophyid mites. In the available literature, there is little information about the sensitivity of different walnut cultivars to an attack by this mite species.

The aim of the present study is to investigate and compare the susceptibility of 14 walnut varieties to attack by the acarina *erinea* (Nal.) (Acarina: Eriophyidae).

14

, *Aceria erinea* (Nal.)  
(Acarina: Eriophyidae).



. 1. *Aceria erinea* (Nal.)



. 2. *Aceria erinea* (Nal.)

**Fig. 1. Damage by *Aceria erinea* (Nal.) on the upper surface of the leaf blade**

**Fig. 2. Damage by *Aceria erinea* (Nal.) on the lower surface of the leaf blade**

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

[7 Bulgarian (Bg), 2 French (F), 2 Hungarian (H) and 3 American (A)] to *Aceria erinea* (Nal.) - McKinney (1923). 2014-2016 . 100 (10 10 ) *A. erinea*. ( 1). 5 *Aceria erinea* (Nal.).

The susceptibility of 14 walnut cultivars [7 Bulgarian (Bg), 2 French (F), 2 Hungarian (H) and 3 American (A)] to *Aceria erinea* attack was evaluated and compared on the basis of the leaf infestation index, calculated by the formula of McKinney (1923). The study was conducted in an experimental walnut orchard of the Fruit Growing Institute – Plovdiv in 2014-2016. The evaluation of the attack produced by these mite species was carried out taking leaf samples from walnut trees at different times of the year (May and Juli). 100 leaves (10 leaves of 10 trees) were sampled at random per cultivar to detect the level of *A. erinea* infestation. The collected leaves were examined in the laboratory for the presence of galls and divided into classes, depending on the percentage of the affected area (Table 1). Based on the number and distribution of the leaves by classes, the infestation index is calculated for each cultivar. All test cultivars, according to the infestation index, are compared and divided into 5 different levels of susceptibility by *Aceria erinea* (Nal.).

1.

### *Aceria erinea* (Nal.)

**Table 1. Classification of the infested leaves according to the degree the affected leaf surface by *Aceria erinea* (Nal.)**

Class of infestation	Classification of the infested leaves	Degree affected leaf surface (%)
1		0 %
Class 1	Not infested leaves	0 % infested area
2		0 – 10 %
Class 2	Slightly infested leaves	0 – 10 % infested area
3		10 - 25 %
Class 3	Average infested leaves	10 - 25 % infested area
4		25 - 50 %
Class 4	Strongly infested leaves	25 - 50 % infested area
5		>50 %
Class 5	Very strongly infested leaves	>50 % infested area



## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Climatically, the three years of the study can be characterized as relatively warm and moderately humid, with a normal distribution of annual rainfall. The summer months were dry and hot, with some exceptions in some of the years (Table 2).

( 2).

2.

2014-2016,

**Table 2. Climatic data, registered in the period 2014-2016, Fruit Growing Institute of Plovdiv**

	Year	/Months							
		March	April	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Temperature °C	2014	9.8	12.7	16.9	21.2	23.5	23.8	18.1	12.6
	2015	6.8	12.4	19.3	21.1	25.3	24.1	20.3	10.4
	2016	9.5	15.5	17.0	23.5	26.0	24.7	20.2	12.8
	<b>2005-2015</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>12.2</b>	<b>17.1</b>	<b>20.9</b>	<b>22.9</b>	<b>22.0</b>	<b>18.4</b>	<b>12.4</b>
Humidity, %	2014	88	65	78	73	58	73	83	86
	2015	80	29	73	78	74	82	76	88
	2016	78	76	80	78	72	71	74	89
	<b>2005-2015</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>31</b>
Rainfall, mm	2014	88	123	66	99	70	53	196	86
	2015	173	14	69	77	5	151	91	91
	2016	57	40	64	25	5	16	2	33
	<b>2005-2015</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>31</b>

2

, *A. erinea*,

3

*A. erinea*.

*A. erinea*,

'Dryanovski'

(

- 26,1), 'Djinovski'

(

17,5), 'Izvor 10'; 'Kuklenski'; 'Slivenski'; 'Silistrenski' 'Sheinovo' -

The analysis of the data in Table 2 shows that the weather conditions during the study were appropriate and contributed to the normal development of the eriophyid mite, *A. erinea*, given the high demands of the species on heat and moisture.

In Table 3 is presented the sensitivity of different walnut cultivars to an attack by *A. erinea*. The results of the study show that not all studied walnut cultivars are equally susceptible to attack by *A. erinea*, independently of variations over the years.

The cultivar 'Dryanovski' is highly sensitive (index of attack in late July average - 26,1), 'Djinovski' sensitive (with an index of 17.5 attack), and cultivars 'Izvor 10'; 'Kuklenski'; 'Slivenski', 'Silistrenski' and 'Sheinovo' - slightly

( 4,5 - sensitive (with an index averaging between 4,5 and 5,6). The cultivars - 'Hartley', 'Seer', 'Lara', 'Milotai 10', 'Tiszacsecsi', 'Fernor' and 'Chandler' are resistant. In the last group of cultivars, no attack from this mite species was found in any of the three years of the study, except for the 'Hartley' cultivar, which is distinguished by earlier leafing in comparison to the others.

3. *Aceria erinea*  
2014-2015,

Table 3. Response of walnut cultivars to *Aceria erinea* attacks in the period 2014-2015, Fruit Growing Institute of Plovdiv

Co Cultivar	Mc Kinney							
	Leaf infestation index, by Mc Kinney							
	/May				/July			
	2014	2015	2016	2014-2016	2014	2015	2016	2014-2016
'Dryanovski'(Bg)	2.3	1.9	2.2	2.1	28.8	23.1	26.3	26.1 <sup>(4)</sup>
'Djinovski'(Bg)	1.5	1.1	1.3	1.3	19.4	15.5	17.7	17.5 <sup>(3)</sup>
'Izvor 10'(Bg)	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.4	6.2	5.0	5.7	5.6 <sup>(2)</sup>
'Slivenski'(Bg)	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.3	5.2	5.1	5.8	5.4 <sup>(2)</sup>
'Kuklenski'(Bg)	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.3	4.8	4.1	5.9	4.9 <sup>(2)</sup>
'Silistrenski'(Bg)	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.3	4.6	4.2	5.2	4.7 <sup>(2)</sup>
'Sheinovo'(Bg)	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	4.9	4.5	4.2	4.5 <sup>(2)</sup>
'Seer'(A)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 <sup>(1)</sup>
'Hartley'(A)	0	0	0	0	0.1	0.1	0	0.1 <sup>(1)</sup>
'Lara'(F)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 <sup>(1)</sup>
'Milotai 10'(H)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 <sup>(1)</sup>
'Tiszacsecsi'(H)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 <sup>(1)</sup>
'Fernor'(F)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 <sup>(1)</sup>
'Chandler'(F)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 <sup>(1)</sup>

: (1) (0,2-10%); (2) (11-25%); (3) (26-50%); (4) (> 50%); (5) (0-0,1% infested area)

Cultivar susceptibility: (1) Resistant (0-0,1% infested area); (2) slightly susceptible (0,2 – 10 % infested area); (3) susceptible (11-25 % infested area); (4) highly susceptible (26-50 % infested area), (5) very highly susceptible (> 50 %) infested area.

A. The analysis of the results shows that the Bulgarian walnut cultivars are more susceptible to an attack of *A. erinea* compared to the introduced walnut cultivars, although there are significant differences between them. All studied walnut cultivars exhibit a different degree of susceptibility, which is manifested throughout the three years of the study.

'Dryanovski' The 'Dryanovski' cultivar is highly

, 'Djinovski'  
, 'Izvor 10';  
'Kuklenski'; 'Slivenski', 'Silistrenski'  
'Sheinovo' –

'Seer', 'Lara', 'Milotai 10', 'Tiszacsecsi',  
'Fernor' 'Chandler'

( 'Seer'),  
3

'Seer'

( ,  
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) ,  
(Gandev et al., 2009),

sensitive, 'Djinovski' is sensitive, and 'Izvor 10'; 'Kuklenski'; 'Slivenski', 'Silistrenski' and 'Sheinovo' – slightly sensitive. The tendency of non-attack of some of the introduced walnut varieties such as 'Seer', 'Lara', 'Milotai 10', 'Tiszacsecsi', 'Fernor' and 'Chandler' is permanent and does not change throughout the study period. It shows that the foreign walnut varieties (except 'Seer'), which develop about 3 weeks later, compared to the Bulgarian ones, are practically resistant to attack by this mite species.

The 'Seer' cultivar is one of the earliest walnut varieties. Its spreading sometimes coincides with unfavorable climatic conditions (low temperatures, leaf damage caused by late spring frost), which may have a negative impact on flowing trees (Gandev et al., 2009), respectively on the migrating eriophyids from the buds to the leaves.

What is the reason for these differences in the sensitivity of the studied walnuts at this stage of the study is difficult to answer. This may be due to differences in the anatomical features of the leaves and their biochemical composition, but also to differences in the period of formation of the vegetative buds, the time of bursting of the apical buds and the moment of leafing.

This study does not answer these questions, but it provides valuable information on the sensitivity of different walnut cultivars to an attack on the *Aceria erinea*, which is the basis for future research in this aspect.

, *Aceria erinea*,

## CONCLUSIONS

1.

, *Aceria erinea*.

1. The studied walnut cultivars do not demonstrated the same susceptibility to attack by Persian walnut erineum mite, *Aceria erinea*.

<p>2. - <i>A. erinea</i>. 3. 'Dryanovski' , 'Djinovski' 'Izvor 10'; 'Kuklenski'; 'Slivenski', 'Silistrenski' 'Sheinovo' <i>A. erinea</i>. 4. 'Hartley', 'Seer', 'Lara', 'Milotai 10', 'Tizacsecsi', 'Fernor' 'Chandler' <i>A. erinea</i>.</p>	<p>2. Bulgarian walnut cultivars are more susceptible to <i>A. erinea</i> attack than the introduced walnut cultivars. 3. The 'Dryanovski' cultivaris is highly sensitive, 'Djinovski' is sensitive, whereas 'Izvor 10'; 'Kuklenski'; 'Slivenski', 'Silistrenski' and 'Sheinovo' cultivars are slightly susceptible to <i>A. erinea</i> attack. <i>A.</i> 4. The introduced walnut cultivars: 'Hartley', 'Seer', 'Lara', 'Milotai 10', 'Tizacsecsi', 'Fernor' and 'Chandler' are resistant to <i>A. erinea</i> attack.</p>
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## *Aceria tristriatus* Nalepa (Acarina: Eriophyidae)

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### Susceptibility of some walnut cultivars to walnut blister mite, *Aceria tristriatus* Nalepa (Acarina: Eriophyidae)

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#### SUMMARY

*Aceria tristriatus* Nalepa (Acarina: Eriophyidae),

(*Juglans regia* L.)

14  
– 7 ( ), 2  
(F), 2 (H) 3 ( )

, *A. tristriatus*.

12-

2014-2016

*A. tristriatus*

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Walnut blister mite, *Aceria tristriatus* Nalepa (Acarina: Eriophyidae), is a potential pest of Persian walnut (*Juglans regia* L.). The aim of the present research was to study and compare the susceptibility of 14 walnut cultivars – 7 Bulgarian (B), 2 French (F), 2 Hungarian (H), and 3 American (A) – to walnut blister mite, *Aceria tristriatus*.

The study was conducted under field conditions in 12-year-old walnut collection orchard of the Fruit Growing Institute - Plovdiv, during the period 2014-2016. Leaf samples to establish the degree of *A. tristriatus* infestation were collected at different times of the year (May and July).

100 leaves (10 leaves of 10 trees) were sampled at random per cultivar.

Collected leaf samples were examined in the laboratory for the presence of galls of this mite species. All infested leaves are divided into classes depending on the number of available galls. The tested cultivars were divided into 5 levels of susceptibility to *A. erinea* based on the

*A. tristriatus* McKinney

*A. tristriatus*.

: *Juglans regia*,  
*Aceria tristriatus*,

(*Juglans regia* L.)  
*Juglans regia* L.)  
 (Amrinae and Stastny, 1994). *Aceria tristriatus* (Nalepa) *A. erineus* (Nalepa)

*Juglans regia* L.,  
 (Castagnoli and Oldfield, 1996). *Aceria tristriatus*

(*Juglans regia* L.)  
 (Natcheff, 1982a).

1,5 mm ( 1 ( 2)

(Natcheff, 1982b).

calculated index of infestation by the formula of McKinney. This paper provides information about cultivar susceptibility of walnut trees to attack by walnut blister mite, *A. tristriatus*.

**Key words:** *Juglans regia*, cultivar susceptibility, walnut blister mite, infestation

## INTRODUCTION

Several eriophyid mites are known to occur on walnuts (*Juglans regia* L.) and other species of *Juglans* (Amrine and Stasny, 1994). *Aceria tristriatus* (Nalepa) and *A. erineus* (Nalepa) appear to be the most common and injurious eriophyids found on *Juglans regia* L., the species to which the most-valued nut-producing cultivars belong.

*Aceria tristriatus* e widespread in Europa and Asia. In Bulgaria it is widely spread and damaging the leaves of the walnut (*Juglans regia* L.) (Natcheff, 1982a). This species is wintering as a detoginous form under the outer shells of the buds or in the cracks of the bark around the buds. At the beginning of vegetation, wintering forms become more active and gradually pass over to the leaves. They cause leaf damage that leads to the formation of small hard pustules (galls) of about 1.5 mm in diameter (Figure 1 and 2), on both surfaces of leaf blades. These are initially light green, turning yellowish and brown.

The galls have a small opening, usually on the underside. They are generally distributed along the midrib and larger lateral veins. If infestation is high, the fall aggregate during growth and the leaves curl and fall.

Such galls are sometimes formed on the leaf stems and rarely on the fruit. The entire life cycle of mites passes inside the calves (Natcheff, 1982b).

Among the many factors influencing the spread of erioid mites, the morphological and biochemical features of the plants play an important role in the spread of erioid mites, as well as the specific features of the varieties, determine the possibility of colonization, feeding and propagation of the erioid mites.

In the available literature, there is no information on the sensitivity of different walnut cultivars to attack by this mite species.



1. *A. tristriatus*

Fig. 1. Damage from *Aceria tristriatus* on a walnut leaf



2. ( ) *A. tristriatus*

Fig. 2. ustules (galls) of *Aceria tristriatus*

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

Susceptibility of 14 walnut cultivars [7 Bulgarian (Bg), 2 French (F), 2 Hungarian (H) and 3 America (A)] to attack by *Aceria tristriatus* (Nal.) was evaluated and compared based on the index of the attack, calculated by the formula McKinney (1923). The study was conducted in an experimental walnut orchard of the Institute of Fruit Growing - Plovdiv in 2014-2016. The evaluation of the attack produced by this mite species was carried out by taking leaf samples from walnut trees at different times of the year (May and July). 100 leaves (10 leaves of 10 trees) were randomly collected to determine the infestation level by *A. tristriatus*. The collected leaves were examined in a laboratory for the presence of galls and divided into classes, depending on the percentage of the affected leaf area (Table 1).

14  
[7 ( g), 2 (F),  
2 (H) 3 ( )]  
*Aceria tristriatus* (Nal.)  
McKinney (1923).  
-  
- 2014-2016 .  
( ) . 100 (10  
10 )  
*A. tristriatus*.

( 1).  
 .  
 ,  
*Aceria tristriatus* (Nal.).

Based on the number and distribution of classes by class, the attack index is calculated for each cultivar. All tested cultivars, according to the index of infestation, were compared and divided into 5 different classes of susceptibility to *Aceria tristriatus* (Nal.).

1.

*Aceria tristriatus*(Nal.)

**Table 1. Classification of the infested leaves according to the degree the affected leaf surface by *Aceria tristriatus* (Nal.)**

Class of infestation	Classification of the infested leaves	(%) Degree affected leaf surface (%)
1		0 %
Class 1	Not infested leaves	0 % infested area
2		0 – 10 %
Class 2	Slightly infested leaves	0 – 10 % infested area
3		10 - 25 %
Class 3	Average infested leaves	10 - 25 % infested area
4		25 - 50 %
Class 4	Strongly infested leaves	25 - 50 % infested area
5		>50 %
Class 5	Very strongly infested leaves	>50 % infested area

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Climatically, all years of study can be regarded as warm and moderately wet at the beginning and end of the season and dry and hot during the summer months. Annual rainfall is normally distributed over the year, less scarce during the June-August period (Table 2).

Analyzing data from Table 2 it can be concluded that the meteorological conditions during the study have favored the normal development of walnut blister mite, *Aceria tristriatus* and its harmful activity.

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 , *Aceria*  
*tristriatus*



Table2. Climatic data, registered in the period 2014-2016, Fruit Growing Institute of Plovdiv

	Year	/ Months							
		March	April	May	Jun	Jul	August	Sep	Oct
Temperature <sup>0</sup> C	2014	9.8	12.7	16.9	21.2	23.5	23.8	18.1	12.6
	2015	6.8	12.4	19.3	21.1	25.3	24.1	20.3	10.4
	2016	9.5	15.5	17.0	23.5	26.0	24.7	20.2	12.8
	2005-2015	6.8	12.2	17.1	20.9	22.9	22.0	18.4	12.4
Humidity, %	2014	88	65	78	73	58	73	83	86
	2015	80	29	73	78	74	82	76	88
	2016	78	76	80	78	72	71	74	89
Rainfall, mm	2014	88	123	66	99	70	53	196	86
	2015	173	14	69	77	5	151	91	91
	2016	57	40	64	25	5	16	2	33
	2005-2015	40	42	65	54	50	38	32	31

3 ,  
A.  
*tristriatus*.  
'Seer', 'Sheinovo',  
'Dryanovski' 'Djinovski'  
(  
26 32.1), 'Izvor 10',  
'Silistrenski', 'Kuklenski', 'Milotai 10'  
'Lara' – (  
15.2 21.6),  
'Slivenski' 'Hartley' –  
(  
13 3.6).  
( 'Tiszacsecsi', 'Fernor'  
'Chandler')

The data in Table 3 shows that different cultivars of walnuts are attacked on an equal scale by *A. tristriatus*. The cultivars 'Seer', 'Sheinovo' 'Dryanovski' and 'Djinovski' are highly susceptible (infestation index ranging between 26 and 32.1), 'Izvor 10', 'Silistrenski', 'Kuklenski', 'Milotai 10' and 'Lara' - susceptible (infestation index ranging between 15.2 and 21.6) and 'Slivenski' and 'Hartley' – slightly susceptible (infestation index 13 and 3.6 respectively). In three of the tested cultivars ('Tiszacsecsi', 'Fernor' and 'Chandler'), no attack of this mite species was detected in any of the three years of the study.

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-  
A.  
*tristriatus*,  
( 'Tiszacsecsi', 'Fernor' and 'Chandler').  
'Sheinovo', 'Dryanovski' 'Djinovski'  
,  
'Izvor 10', 'Silistrenski' 'Kuklenski'  
, 'Slivenski'  
,  
'Seer'  
'Milotai 10' 'Lara'

The analysis of the results shows that all tested cultivars are more or less attacked by *A. tristriatus*, with the exception of three of them ('Tiszacsecsi', 'Fernor' and 'Chandler'). Some of the Bulgarian cultivars such as 'Sheinovo', 'Dryanovski' and 'Djinovski' are highly susceptible, others such as 'Izvor 10', 'Silistrenski' and 'Kuklenski' are susceptible, and 'Slivenski' is slightly susceptible. Among the introduced cultivars, 'Seer' is highly susceptible, 'Milotai 10' and 'Lara' are susceptible, and

'Hartley' : 'Tiszacsecsi', 'Hartley' is slightly susceptible. In three of the foreign cultivars: 'Tiszacsecsi', 'Fernor' and 'Chandler' no attack was registered, which is why they are considered to be sustainable.

3. *Aceria tristriatus*  
2014-2015,

Table 3. Response of walnut cultivars to *Aceria tristriatus* attacks in the period 2014-2015, Fruit Growing Institute of Plovdiv

Cultivar	Leaf infestation index, by Mc Kinney							
	/ May				/ July			
	2014	2015	2016	2014 - 2016	2014	2015	2016	2014 - 2016
'Seer' (A)	4.2	3.0	3.8	3.7	33.4	26.8	30.5	30.2 <sup>(4)</sup>
'Dryanovski' (Bg)	3.8	3.0	3.2	3.5	30.2	24.3	27.6	27.4 <sup>(4)</sup>
'Djinovski' (Bg)	3.7	3.2	3.6	3.5	28.8	23.0	26.3	26.0 <sup>(4)</sup>
'Slivenski' (Bg)	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.5	13.4	12.8	12.9	13.0 <sup>(2)</sup>
'Kuklenski' (Bg)	2.9	2.8	3.9	3.2	16.0	13.7	19.7	16.5 <sup>(3)</sup>
'Izvor 10' (Bg)	3.2	2.9	3.1	3.2	23.4	18.9	21.5	21.3 <sup>(3)</sup>
'Silistrenski' (Bg)	3.0	2.9	3.6	3.2	21.3	19.5	24.1	21.6 <sup>(3)</sup>
'Sheinovo' (Bg)	4.2	4.5	4.0	4.2	34.7	31.8	29.7	32.1 <sup>(4)</sup>
'Hartley' (A)	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.3	3.4	3.2	4.3	3.6 <sup>(2)</sup>
'Lara' (F)	3.0	2.9	3.9	3.3	20.9	16.7	19.1	18.9 <sup>(3)</sup>
'Milotai 10' (H)	2.8	2.4	2.6	2.6	16.4	14.1	15.0	15.2 <sup>(3)</sup>
'Tiszacsecsi' (H)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 <sup>(1)</sup>
'Fernor' (F)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 <sup>(1)</sup>
'Chandler' (A)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 <sup>(1)</sup>

(0, 0,1 % infested area; (2) slightly susceptible (0,2 – 10 % infested area); (3) susceptible (11-25 % infested area); (4) highly susceptible (26-50 % infested area), (5) very highly susceptible (> 50 %) infested area.

*A. tristriatus*

The reason for the differences in the sensitivity of individual walnut cultivars to attack by *A. tristriatus* at this stage of the study was not clear. It may be due to differences in the anatomical structure of the leaves, their biochemical composition, but may be related to certain varietal features such as the time of vegetative bud formation, apical buds breaking time, leafing time, etc.

In support of these assumptions is the fact that the 'Seer' cultivar, which is the most susceptible, is actually the earliest cultivar Gandev et al. (2014b), while the 'Tiszacsecsi', 'Fernor' and 'Chandler' cultivars, which are practically not attacking, are one of the latest leafing

(Gandev and Arnaudov, 2014; Gandev et al., 2014 ).

cultivars (Gandev and Arnaudov, 2014; Gandev et al., 2014a).

- This study does not answer these questions, but it provides valuable information on the susceptibility of different walnut cultivars to an attack by walnut blister mite, *Aceria tristriatus*, which is the basis for new future research in this aspect.

, *Aceria tristriatus*,

## CONCLUSIONS

1. , *Aceria tristriatus*.

2. 'Sheinovo', 'Dryanovski' 'Djinovski' , 'Izvor 10', 'Silistrenski' 'Kuklenski' – , 'Slivenski' - *Aceria tristriatus*.

3. 'Milotai 10' 'Lara' , 'Seer' , 'Hartley' *Aceria tristriatus*.

4. 'Tizacsecsi', 'Fernor' 'Chandler' , *Aceria tristriatus*.

1. The studied walnut cultivars are not equally susceptible to attack by walnut blister mite, *Aceria tristriatus*.

2. The Bulgarian walnut cultivars 'Sheinovo', 'Dryanovski' and 'Djinovski' are highly susceptible, 'Izvor 10', 'Silistrenski' and 'Kuklenski' - susceptible, and 'Slivenski' - slightly susceptible to attack by *Aceria tristriatus*.

3. Foreign 'Milotai 10' 'Lara' walnut cultivars are susceptible, 'Seer' is highly susceptible, and 'Hartley' is slightly susceptible to attack by *Aceria tristriatus*.

4. The introduced 'Tizacsecsi', 'Fernor' and 'Chandler' walnut cultivars are resistant to attack by walnut blister mite *Aceria tristriatus*.

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