

## Focus Orchard Trial: Cripps Pink on MM106 Pruning Trial in the Goulburn Valley

**Orchard:** Plunkett Orchards

**Orchardist:** Sean Plunkett

**Prepared by:** Michael Crisera, Fruit Growers Victoria Ltd.

### Why we decided on this trial:

- The implications of the trial are to determine the effect of the timing of pruning on Pink Lady™ apple trees and the trees vigour response.
- The trial results will help growers ascertain the optimum timing for pruning for Pink Lady™ on MM106 rootstock (most commonly planted in the GV over the last 10 years). Growers who are struggling to contain vigour in Pink Lady™ apple trees will see pruning comparisons in the block and take back to their own operations.
- Old style pruning barriers will have to be overcome and the risks associated with late pruning (sunburn, fruit marking).

### What have we learnt so far?

After a year of pruning and harvest time shoot measurements there are no clear differences from the measurements taken to date. This season's measurements focussed mostly on shoot numbers and shoot length. Trying to ascertain a difference when collating the data has proven difficult.

Observationally there is a significant difference in the photos within this report but when measuring shoot length and shoot numbers per treatment the variability within the trees from trial plot to trial plot varied significantly.

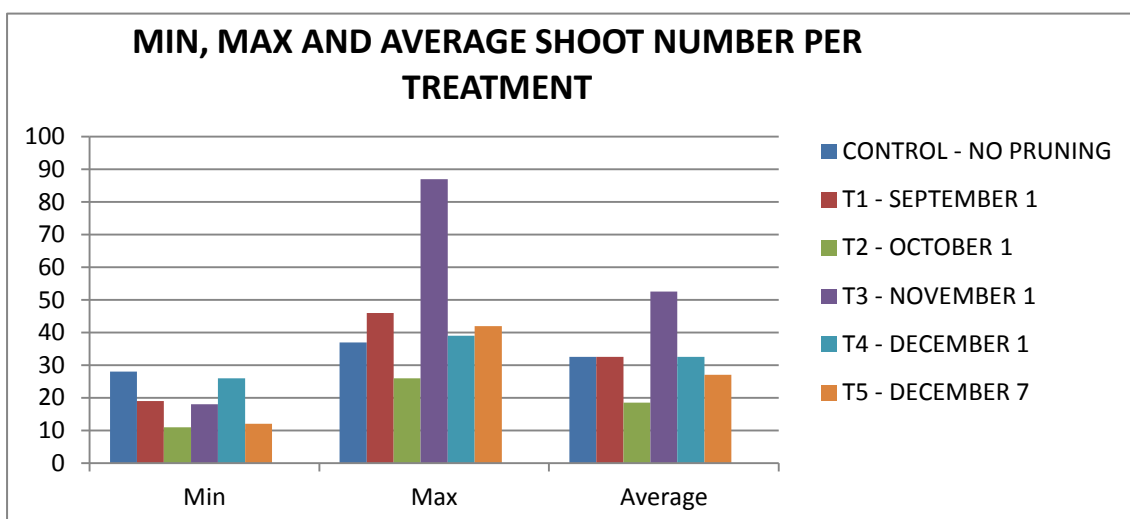
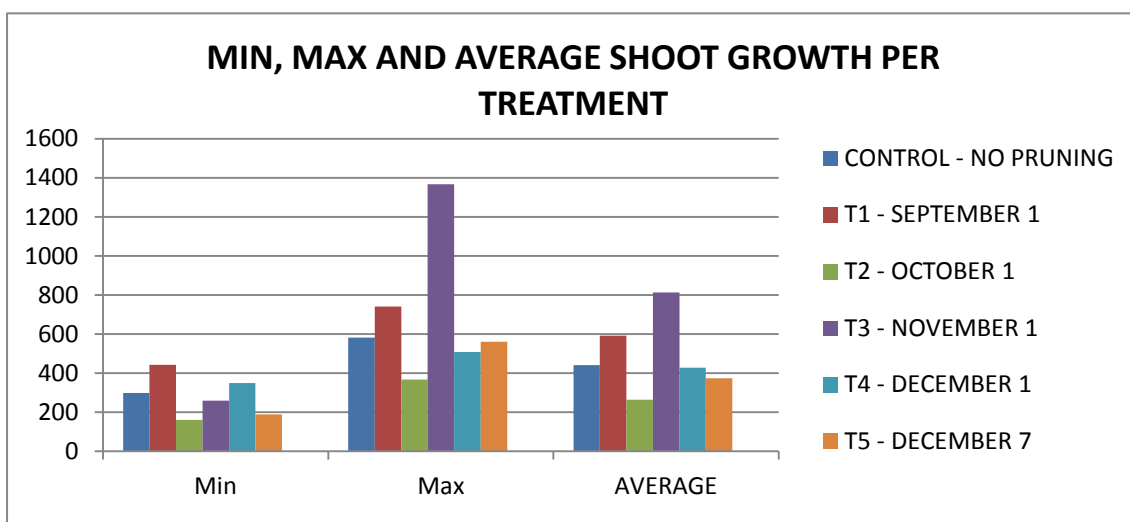
November pruning seems to have had a higher vigour response when in fact the reduced number of fruit has contributed to the high numbers of shoots and longer shoot length.

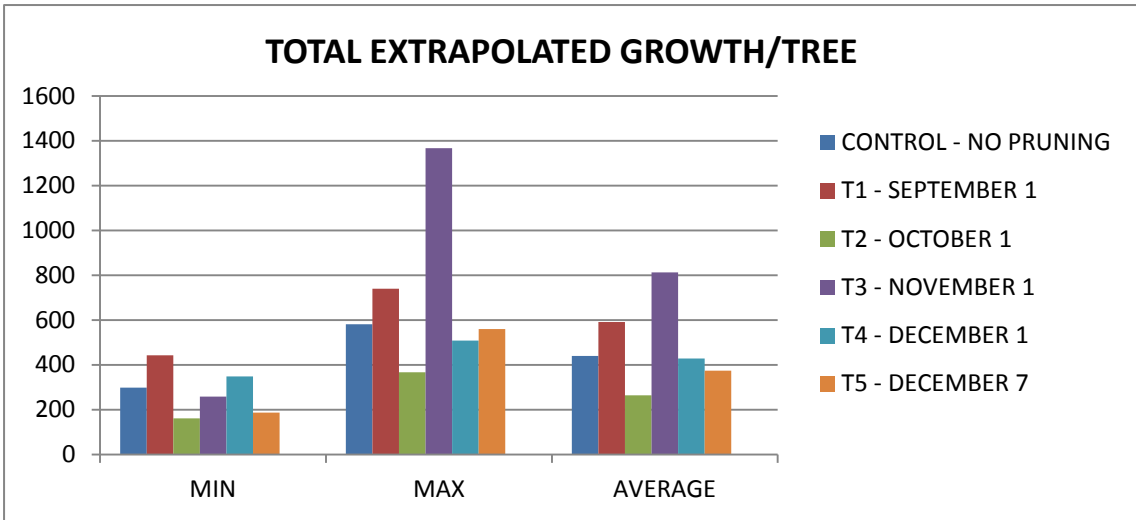
## Where to from here?

This trial is to be continued into the next growing season in the same trial plots. More measurements will be taken from all plots such as fruit size at harvest, fruit number at harvest and a colour score per fruit from the chosen tree in each plot. Observationally the results are more positive with the later pruning treatment however we need to also include a winter pruned section (July) in next seasons trialwork.

## Thanks:

Thanks to Jason Shields and Bavesh Donga from Plunkett orchards for their great work and assistance so far in this trial.





CONTROL (NO PRUNING)



1<sup>ST</sup> WEEK SEPT.



1<sup>ST</sup> WEEK OCT.



1<sup>ST</sup> WEEK NOV.



1<sup>ST</sup> WEEK DEC.



2<sup>ND</sup> WEEK DEC.

NOTE: Data from the measurements taken on treatment 3 (first week of November) have been influenced by the lighter cropload, therefore longer shoots have influenced results.

All treatments were pruned the December period for the previous growing season (2011/2012) and root pruned during the month of August 2012.

**PRUNING NOTES:** When pruning later in the season it is a slower process as we tended to prune while looking at the fruit that had set. 12oclock and 6 oclock rule was adhered to. Pruning during the blossom period had the challenge of bees. These blocks had the same chemical thinning program including ATS and Ethrel 5 days post full bloom. No maxcel or carbaryl used or hand thinning.