



Apple Crop Load Management: Enhancing Thinning Predictability and Tree Response Through Advancements in Modelling and New Precision Thinning Products, Strategies and Technology



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This research activity is aimed at thinning flowers or fruits on overloaded apple trees using new chemical thinners and technologies. At the Ontario Crops Research Centre in Simcoe, Ont., several experiments were conducted this past growing season addressing the research objectives. The 2025 fall harvest in the region went as expected and was fairly typical.

In 2025, the Ontario research team tested late applications of Accede for the thinning of Ambrosia and Gala apples. Accede didn't display effective thinning. This could be due to weather conditions or other physiological reasons though – the researchers are continuing to investigate.

At Walsh Farms in Berwick, N.S. the research team has evaluated decision-support tools and new fruitlet thinners under two growing seasons to account for

weather variability. Both new chemical thinners are now commercially available. Extreme drought conditions in the region limited fruit weight and yield during the 2025 growing season.

One product, Brevis, will be commercially available for the first time in Canada this spring. Accede, previously became commercially available in 2024. Results from this research activity will provide grower insight on how to implement its use in commercial orchards.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Late applications of Accede for the thinning of Ambrosia and Gala apples didn't display effective thinning in Ontario. Late application of Accede for thinning of Honeycrisp apples was effective in Nova Scotia though. This could be due to weather conditions or other physiological reasons.
- Extreme drought conditions in Nova Scotia limited fruit weight and yield during the 2025 growing season.
- Brevis will be commercially available for the first time in Canada this spring.



Gala apples were harvested in late September from treatment trees as part of the fruit thinning research trial in Nova Scotia.



Gala apple trees ready to be harvested in late September as part of the fruit thinning research trial in Nova Scotia. Photos: Michelle Cortens

