

(62)

CARIBBEAN CHERRY (*MALPIGHIA PUNICIFOLIA*) FRUIT GROWTH AS AFFECTED BY A SPRAYED SEAWEED (*ASCOPHYLLUM NODOSUM*) EXTRACT

J. Pablo Morales-Payan

Department of Horticulture, University of Puerto Rico-Mayagüez. PO Box 9030. Mayagüez, Puerto Rico 00681-9030.

Experiments were conducted to determine the influence of a marine plant (*Ascophyllum nodosum*) extract (0-5 L/ha) on the fruit growth rate and size of Caribbean cherry. Aqueous solutions of the extract were sprayed on the fruitlets 2 d after anthesis. Fruit diameter and weight were determined daily until commercial maturity was reached. Fruit growth was sigmoidal in all the treatments. Fruit growth tended to be more rapid and fruit size and weight tended to be larger as the *Ascophyllum nodosum* extract rates increased. These results indicate that *Ascophyllum nodosum* extracts may be useful in enhancing fruit size and yield in Caribbean cherry.