

Abstract:

Blueberry culture in Huelva (Andalusia, SW Spain) has increased during the past decade, and is likely to continue to do so. The area planted has increased by 100-fold in the last 10 years. Factors limiting future blueberry production are: the lack of chilling hours; deficit of water (drought); field and postharvest pest and diseases; reliance on local fresh markets. Because this fruit is relatively new in the south of Spain, research on cultural adaptation, and on marketing must be developed before blueberries become a significant locally consumed fruit. Current cropping is aimed at the export market. Pest and disease occurrences, as well as life cycles of the studied pathogens, vary with local environmental condition and cultivars grown in the area. Three-year data on cultivar assessment and phytosanitary monitoring are presented and discussed on this work. Future lines of research programs on low-chilling blueberry improvement in west Andalusia are also reported.