

**Tricia crop Report, Week #22**  
**Holland, May 30th, 2005,**

Fruit load is nearing its peak; 140 to 150 tomatoes are no exceptions. Differences between growers are obvious mainly due to different plant densities. Some are already harvesting from the final density with weeks of up to two kg while others are still harvesting from the initial or intermediate density achieving slightly lower yields.

**Large Fruit Load**

Lately there is some discussion about wilting leaves on the plant or stem. The warm days and intense irradiance of last week has contributed to this. We see this symptom with many varieties and more often in crops with large fruit loads.

When the fruit load is large, the plants, which literally hang in the strings, have a tough time. Especially when they carry 150 fruits of 140-150 gram; that is quickly 7-7.5 kilogram. Some think that what is happening is the string would press into the stem pinching the vascular system and therefore reducing water flow. Usually when the rate of transpiration is reduced, the plant will recover and the only permanent symptom might be some burnt leaf tips.

These symptoms will not be common anymore after the middle of June. In addition, fruit loads will be declining. The only thing we can do now is to make sure that the plant gets enough water. Especially during the periods that the plant needs it most, we have to aim for a water application of 3.5 to 4cc per Joule. In addition, we have to grow with enough speed without sacrificing vigor. Compensate lower 24-hr temperatures on darker days with a slightly higher one on bright days. Fast ripening of the fruits would be nice, possibly with a grow-pipe of about 40°C

**Pruning**

Another topic is pruning. We see that there are large differences in pruning. Do not underestimate this. Late or sloppy pruning can lead to an unnecessarily large fruit load. This will result in more trailers or large clusters that have to be cut in half at sorting. This all gives extra work and that is not something we need. In closing: Is clipping the plants an option for you?