Hail Damage

The level of damage to kiwifruit plants depends on the severity of the hailstorm, and the time of year it occurs.

Shredded leaves and pitted fruit are typical symptoms of hail damage. Canes can also be bruised putting the ensuing year(s) crop at risk.

In extreme cases vines may be completely defoliated, and entire crops lost.

Typical Symptoms of Plant Damage

Aside from erecting artificial cover over your canopy, there is very little that can be done to prevent hail damage.

Hail insurance is available to growers from the Zespri pool. Claims must be made within 48 hours of the damage occurring.

Should a hail strike occur apply a seaweed foliar fertilizer to help the leaves recover.

A PsA protective spray should also be considered if leaf and cane damage is significant.

Fruit close to harvest is most susceptible to hail damage, and may result in storage difficulties. This is especially a problem if the damage is not readily visible and able to be removed.

Assess the level of damage within areas of the orchard, and only pack crops or maturity areas with less than 20% damage.

If the fruit is mature, harvest it within 4 days of the hail event. Dehydrate before packing and pack into packs without liners for repacking 2-3 weeks later if damage is suspected but not visible.

Slicing the fruit will show if hail bruising has occurred.

In 2009 three severe hailstorms hit the Bay of Plenty, NZ, during harvest, resulting in a loss of around 3 million trays. This cost the industry in excess of $10 million.