PEST ALERT ! SCALE INSECTS
If you have weak or dead areas, or reddish areas this spring, perhaps you have scale insect. Two species of scale insect (cranberry scale and Dearness scale) appear to be on the rise this year. This may just be a fluke of conditions or the tip of the iceberg of a major new insect problem. Scale infestations have been found in all of our growing regions and out on the Cape.

Recent outbreaks have previously been reported in other cranberry areas, but not in MA. The insect sucks sap from the cranberry stem. New scales will be produced as we approach bloom or during bloom, and this is the time when the insects spread.

What to do: 1) Be thinking about this problem so it does not get out of control. Carefully check areas on the bog where vines appear weakened or are reddish. Some growers have reported discrete round red areas that are infested while others have more extensive injury.

2) Look for dark or white bumps on the upright’s stem. The bumps will be crunchy when crushed with a fingernail. If the insect is still alive, goo will come out.

3) We have insecticide efficacy information coming in, so watch for updates.

Scales are usually detected as tiny, immobile and legless blobs underneath a protective shell (so they are called ‘armored scales’).

Area in photo on right has severe scale infestation; vines have weakened and died. (photo taken 21 May)

Left: Cranberry scale (identification pending) appears as small, dark discs on the upright stem. Where the scale covering has come off, you can sometimes see some white residue.
Dearness scale (below) is like a tiny white clamshell and can be seen easily on the woody part of the upright’s stem.

Left -- shell covering on upright. right—sac-like and legless insect with its covering removed (photo by J.S. Mann. DM Crop Consulting and Diagnostics, Ltd.).

Severe scale infestation in dead area shows white dots that are the scale insect.