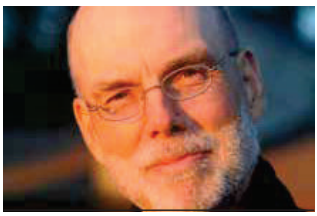


Dormant sprays for fruit trees



Steve Renquist
Ask a Master Gardener

Question: I have some fruit trees that seem to get hammered by disease and insects every year. What can I do to protect them this winter?

Answer: Anyone who wants to raise tree fruit crops needs to know that dormant sprays are extremely helpful to control overwintering insect pests and tree fruit diseases.

What they may not realize is that if you have a dormant spray program, you make your summer pest control job about 80% easier. Reducing the amount of overwintering disease inoculum, or insect eggs and pupae, heading into spring truly makes a sustainable low input summer pest control program possible.

Dormant sprays with orchard crops are generally applied from about 50% leaf fall in November to bud break in late February depending on the type of fruit trees you are raising. In the dormant season, when plants have lost many or all of their leaves, protective sprays can do a much better job of hitting and covering all of the tree surfaces where pests are overwintering.

It is also very important to use horticultural oil or spreader stickers with all tank mixes when making dormant sprays to help products stay on the target areas during our wet winter.

To minimize spray runoff or wash off, make sure to check the weather forecast before you spray. Don't spray anything if the tree surface is wet or if rain is forecast to fall before the products have a chance to dry on the tree surface.

If you are raising stone fruit crops (apricot, peach, plum, prune, nectarine, cherry) you will want to start your dormant spray schedule with an application of fixed copper in fall when trees have dropped about half of their leaves. Fixed copper materials have many different brand names, so just read the



An apple with scab disease

PHOTOS COURTESY OF STEVE RENQUIST



Peach leaf curl

label closely on the product your garden store sells to make sure it is registered for the fruit or ornamental trees you have. Fixed

copper is used to control diseases like shot hole fungus, peach leaf curl or Anthracnose cankers.

The stone fruit trees will



Pear fireblight canker

also require a dormant oil spray in January or February before bud break to help control overwintering insects and insect eggs,

and the final dormant spray for stone fruit trees should be sulfur or Ziram at delayed dormant when the buds of the trees just

begin to swell. Don't wait until the buds are opening since many fungi can enter the buds in late winter and infect the tiny new leaves. This late spray timing is critical to control peach leaf curl.

If you are raising pome fruit (apple, pear) or nut crops (hazelnut, walnut) you should inspect your trees for Anthracnose and other cankers in late fall and prune out any infected wood. After pruning out cankers, start your dormant spray schedule with an application of fixed copper to control Anthracnose canker spore release.

In January or February apply a dormant oil spray to control pear psylla, scale, mite eggs and aphids. Pear, apple and nut trees will benefit from a delayed dormant, late winter sulfur spray to control fungal disease, moss and lichen, especially on old fruit trees. Remember to always follow the labels of all your spray products closely.

During the late fall and winter, it is very helpful to your overall pest control program to encourage the decomposition of old fruit and leaves still in the orchard by mowing or raking up debris. This will limit disease spore dispersal in the coming season.

OSU Extension has a helpful publication called "Managing Disease and Insects in Home Orchards" (EC631). Access the publication online at extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog. Click on gardening, and then tree fruit and nuts. Then enter EC631 in the search box. The publication has spray schedules for apple, pear, stone fruit, hazelnut and walnut trees.

With the "stay safe and stay at home" directives we are getting, implementing a good pest control program for your fruit trees will be a timely alternative to travel. Have fun!

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