

Gardening Articles for week ending 10<sup>th</sup> October 2015

Written by Wally Richards. [Photo]

## GARDENING TASKS

Now that we are halfway through Spring and quickly heading to the first month of Summer (December) there is a fair bit to do in our gardens so lets run a check list in case some things are missed.

It will depend on what you have in your gardens as to whether any or all things aspects concern you.

**Roses:** generally at this time we have new foliage, buds and some flowering taking place.

If there is any sign of black spot or rust, spray the roses and soil underneath with a solution of potassium permanganate mixed at ¼ a teaspoon to a litre of non chlorinated water and spray. (It may stain walls etc temporarily).

**Food for Roses** ; ideal is horse manure, blood & bone otherwise sheep manure pellets with the blood & bone. These should be covered with some purchased compost.

Add to this a sprinkling of Rok Solid and once a month a small sprinkling of Fruit & Flower Power.

If you want good roses avoid soil damaging fertilisers such as rose fertiliser and nitrophoska.

Bio Boost is also a good natural slow release one and very well priced.

If you have roses that need recovery from past chemical sprays such as Shield (now banned) the chemicals will have broken down the natural immunity of your roses. You may like to start a recovery spray program which I wrote about originally just on 10 years ago.

On the first of the month mix the following at their label rates per a litre of water, PerKfection Supa for Roses, Magic Botanic Liquid, Mycorrcin & Wallys Neem Tree Oil. Spray late in the day just before sunset. Then on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month repeat spray all the above except for PerKfection Supa.

Only water with non chlorinated water so you don't harm the beneficial soil life including the gardeners best friend, earthworms.

In some cases the health improvement of your roses will be quickly noticed; although some may have the additional problem of inherently poor breeding and always be a sickly specimen (even if they have brilliant flowers)

**Lawns:** I have had a number of enquiries about lawn problems starting with moss in lawns.

Dont waste your money on sulphate of iron as it only burns the top of the moss which then it quickly comes back.

Instead, jet spray the moss with Moss & Liverwort Control. It kills the moss completely without

damaging the grasses.

If there is a spongy feeling when walking on the lawn that indicates a thatch problem. Simply spray the lawn with Thatch Busta to clean up the thatch. (Do the moss killing first, wait about 2 weeks then the Thatch Busta.)

Bare patches in the lawn indicate the root damage caused by grass grubs in the autumn/winter period and these same grubs are now down deep, pupating to emerge shortly as beetles.

They are too deep to do anything about them at this time so don't waste your money on treating. The horse has gone so no need to close the gate.

Another bare patch problem with holes in the lawn indicate that porina caterpillars are at work eating at the base of the grass in the evening (when they are safe from birds) to return to their tunnels before dawn.

A simple spray over the lawn with Wallys Neem Tree Oil will stop the damage and cause them to starve to death. In areas where porina are a problem treat the lawn this way every 3 months.

When the grass grub beetles emerge they are going to eat the foliage of several plants so after you have noticed holes in the leaves go out after dark with a torch and have a look. If you have beetles then spray then with a mix of Key Pyrethrum and Wallys Neem Tree Oil. Repeat nightly.

Also a bright light in a window facing the lawn with a trough two thirds full of water with a film of kerosene floating on the top; placed directly under the window pane, will trap lots of beetles (maybe a few Codlin Moths too)

They fly at the bright light hit the pane and fall into the water where the kerosene stops them from escaping.

Feed the beetles to the chickens next morning or flush down the toilet.

By the way if you do not have two or three chickens and you have room for a small hen house and run it is a great investment. They will convert kitchen scraps and weeds into the best manure around and as a bonus supply you with a few eggs that you will find really tasty and magic for baking.

Not only that you are a bit more self-sufficient and protesting in a small way against the battery hen practices.

**Weeds;** they certainly grow at this time of the year and as long as you deal to them before they set seed they are not too much of a problem. In fact weeds are an excellent asset to your garden soils as they have taken up goodness which can be returned to great advantage.

You could pull the weeds out, shake the soil off them and lay them back down on the soil. That is good but even better; with a sharp knife slice through the weeds just below soil surface. This leaves the roots in the soil to rot and provide food for the soil life and it does not disrupt the beneficial fungi in the soil.

The foliage can be laid on the soil surface where it will be quickly devoured by the soil life and worms.

Your soil will build up humus quickly if you spray the dying weeds with Mycorrhizal.

Doing these things (sure it takes a bit of time but it is so therapeutic and anti-stressful) will overtime make for dream gardens and plants.

**Citrus**; its a good time to sprinkle Wallys Neem tree Granules underneath the citrus trees from the trunk to the drip line. This will help prevent insect damage.

If you have chook manure give a good sprinkling of that otherwise any animal manure or sheep manure pellets along with blood & bone. Cover with compost. Sprinkle Fruit and Flower Power once a month.

A spray of Wallys Liquid Copper with Raingard added in the spring and autumn will help with any citrus diseases. If the trees are looking a bit sad add Perkfection Supa to the copper spray.

In cases where wet feet have rotted roots treat the area with Terracin to suppress the pathogens and help save the tree. Three weeks later spray the soil with Mycorrhizal. Note always use non-chlorinated water which is easily achieved with a special carbon bonded filter on your outside tap.

**Codlin Moth**; apple trees are starting to flower and if in the past you have had codlin moth problems then likely they will be even worse each year.

From the trunk to the drip line sprinkle Wallys Neem Tree Granules.

After fruit set you can wrap some branches with crop cover, taped at the trunk end and the overlap held with clothes pegs.

The moths cant lay their eggs on branches protected by the crop cover.

It would work also on **guava moths**.

Alternatively hang a tin of treacle in the tree in a onion bag, monitor every couple of days for moths caught which tells you when they are on the wing.

Spray the apples with Wallys Neem tree Oil and Raingard and repeat about every 10 to 14 days till no more activity in your treacle trap.

**Pear Slugs**; In warmer areas and later in cooler areas the pear slugs will attack pear and plum trees, they eat small holes in the foliage and look like a black slug. Simply spray the tree with Wallys Liquid Copper to control.

Remember be nice to your gardens by being natural.