

COPPER TIME

One of the best protections against diseases in spring on new plant foliage is the traditional copper sprays. On fruit trees and ornamentals including roses, the film of copper will offer good protection against a range of diseases that occur in spring while moist, cool to warm conditions prevail.

Checking my own fruit trees and roses I see that buds are now swelling and new shoots are appearing on the roses. It is not so much the temperature that brings on the new season's growth, but the increasing amount of light hours each day. Most plants respond to light hours more than they do to temperatures.

Any pruning that has not been done should be attended to as soon as practical.

Pruning should only be done on warmer days, when there is lower humidity. The disease, Silverleaf favors cool temperatures and moist conditions to strike.

Once pruning is completed the wounds should be sealed with a spray of **Liquid Copper with Raingard** added. On fruit trees the swelling buds should also be protected with the same spray.

Even if there is no sign of movement on some trees such as the pip fruit, it does not hurt to start the copper spray program and repeat every 14 days.

The best copper to use is **Liquid Copper** which is also a commercial product with a very high concentration of very fine copper particles. Used at only 3.5 mls per litre of water it places a very fine film of copper over the plant.

To ensure that the copper film is not affected by weather 1

ml of **Raingard** can be added for each litre of spray.

This gives rain protection within half an hour of spraying, which will last for about 14 days of average rainfall.

Using the **Raingard** means that your time and money is not wasted if it rains during the 14 day period. For most plants a repeat spray in a 2 weekly cycle is all that is then needed till the disease period is finished.

Liquid copper has another distinct advantage over all the other powder type coppers.

As it is already a liquid it mixes extremely well in water and does not cause blockage of spray jets which often happens in the case of the powder coppers.

One of the worst disease problems in the spring is curly leaf disease on peaches and nectarines.

Often the copper spray every 14 days is insufficient to prevent a lot of damage. The leaves once they start to move, can out grow the film leaving parts of the leaf vulnerable to the disease.

Commercial growers will be spraying every 7 to 10 days to compensate for the growth.

Another aspect is from a book that I read by Dr Maynard Murry who treated stone fruit trees with **Ocean Solids** (All the minerals from the ocean). His trials involved a group of nectarine trees, placing the **Ocean Solids** in the root zone of every second tree. All the trees were then sprayed with the fungus disease, curly leaf.

The **Ocean Solid** treated trees showed no sign of the disease where the untreated trees died within three years.

This year as well as the sprays of **Liquid Copper and Raingard** my trees have also been given a dose of the **Ocean Solids**. Interestingly I have heard from the odd

gardener that some stone fruit trees growing near the coast have never had curly leaf problems. Likely it would be the salt spray that has done the trick.

It also works on the principal that if you give a plant every possible mineral and element that it may desire to have available, the plant will grow very healthy and not contract any diseases unless it is placed into stress for some other reason.

The same of course applies to our own bodies in that we require 92 odd elements for our own cells to replicate perfectly and provide a very strong immune system.

By applying **Ocean Solids** to our edible gardens of fruit and vegetables we are obtaining many of the minerals that are not normally found in conventionally grown food.

Ultimately you can also grow wheat grass with the **Ocean Solids** and juice it as wheat grass is one of the few plants that will take up all the 90 odd elements when available.

Now would be a good time to apply **Ocean Solids** to all your fruit trees, vegetable areas and preferred plants such as Roses. This will allow the crystals to water down into the root system before the new season's growth becomes too far advanced. **Ocean Solids** are only applied once a year.

Bladder plum on plum trees is another disease that can greatly reduce the amount of fruit that will mature. For this the **Liquid Copper spray and Raingard** are used. You start this program when the tree's flowers start to open. Spray late in the day when the pollination has finished for the day. Repeat every 7 to 10 days.

A point to remember is to never add any spraying oils, to any type of copper spray.

It greatly reduces the effectiveness of any copper and will

increase the wash-off of copper particles in rain. If an oil needs to be sprayed (in most cases it is not) then make the oil spray a separate issue a few days before applying a copper spray.