

SPRING HAS SPRUNG

During this last week with nice sunny days through out the country, has made us aware that nature and our gardens are in back into full, early spring mode.

I see in my own garden the first plum trees are in flower, a peach tree budding up nicely and about to flower also; dormant daffodil bulbs are back into foliage and the pine trees next door are laden with pollen.

Silverbeet and spinach which had been slowly growing over the past few months are now picking up speed and showing lots of new growth over the past couple of weeks.

The warmer temperatures help but it is the ever increasing hours of light that make the real difference to plants and unfortunately the weeds also.

The garden centres have been busy with lots of people getting plants and seeds organised for the spring.

There is lots to do so lets go through a list of some of the things that may be applicable to your garden.

Starting with fruit trees; it is a good time to check your citrus trees, if their leaves are not a nice dark green then they are lacking in magnesium and seeing that they are likely in fruit, a dose of potash would make the fruit juicer when ripe. Both can be simply achieved by an application of **Fruit and Flower Power** applied now and repeated once a month till harvest.

If there is any black sooty mould on the foliage and fruit, then there will be insects such as scale or mealy bugs active, secreting honey dew which turns to the black mould. A spray all over with **Neem Tree Oil** should be applied and repeated about a month later.

If you have borer in the tree then sprinkle **Neem Tree Granules** under the tree to the drip line and then spray the granules with **Neem Tree Oil** at 25ml per litre and repeat this spray about a month later.

That should knock out any borer in the tree and help control any other insects as well.

Stone fruit trees will likely have curly leaf disease happening as the new leaves emerge.

The traditional prevention is to spray the tree every 7 to 10 days with **Liquid Copper with Raingard** added. If you can keep a film of copper over the new leaves until the disease time has passed, then most of the leaves should be clean and not distorted.

I have heard of another interesting method but I am not sure how effective it is.

The gardener that told me about it said they sprinkled Soda Ash (Washing Soda) under the tree out along the drip line each season when the leaves start to emerge. If there is any sign of leaf curl later then another dose is applied.

Washing soda is available from some Supermarkets in a lump form which should be broken down to more of a powder and then applied and lightly watered in.

It is an interesting solution and one that I am going to try this season. If you do it, then I would be interested to hear of any results, good or bad, that you find.

If it works as well as my informant said, then it would save a lot of time spraying.

Plum trees may have the disease bladder plum which means some of the immature fruit become distorted, looking like a bladder.

The solution to this is to spray late in the day when the tree is in flower with **Liquid**

Copper and Raingard. Repeat about every 7 days till flowering is finished and the fruit are well formed.

Copper sprays at this time over all fruit trees and roses will not do any harm and may prevent possible problems. Do not add any spraying oils to the copper as it reduces the effectiveness of the copper and is a waste of money.

If you have not done your final pruning of your roses do so now and then spray them with the **Liquid Copper and Raingard.**

You can add to the spray **Magic Botanic Liquid (MBL)** to further increase the health of the roses.

Then two weeks later spray the roses with **MBL, Perkfection Supa and Mycorrcin.**

Then two weeks later spray again with just the **MBL and Mycorrcin.** Then repeat two weeks later with **MBL, Perkfection Supa and Mycorrcin.** Two weeks later with **MBL and Mycorrcin.**

Repeat the same right through the season till autumn. This spray program will greatly assist with the prevention of black spot and rust.

Only feed your roses natural foods such as sheep manure pellets, **Bio Boost, blood & bone,** animal manures, compost, potash and magnesium. Sprinkling some **Rok Solid and Ocean Solids** around each rose will give them all the minerals they may require to be full of health and do not water them with chlorinated water as it harms the soil life and the health of the roses.

Chlorinated water out of the tap is harmful to soil life and worms and the easy way around the problem is to place a 10 micron filter on the outdoor taps.

Your early seed potatoes should be nicely sprouted and greened up about now and ready for planting.

You can either plant them in a deep hole or in a more shallow hole and then mould them up as the foliage comes through. The reason for this is that potato plants will produce tubers all the way up the trunks, so in theory the longer the trunk is under ground the bigger the crop.

In the base of the planting hole place a couple of tablespoons of sheep manure pellets, one tablespoon of gypsum and a level teaspoon of **BioPhos** along with about a tablespoon of **Neem Tree Granules.**

Later on when the covering of the trunk is completed and the foliage is allowed to grow on, then sprinkle as a side dressing some **Neem Tree granules** and a little **Rok Solid.**

You are unlikely to have much of a problem with the potato psyllid early in the season and hopefully the **Neem Granules** will help, as the season progresses they will build up numbers and damage to the young tubers will occur. Then sprays of **Neem Tree Oil** along with the **Neem Granules** applications will be more necessary. The same applies to your tomato plants as well, later in the season.

Neem Granules should also be placed in the planting hole of your tomatoes and sprinkled on the soil under the plants to assist in the control of whitefly. Repeat the granules about every 6 weeks.

Sprays of Neem Oil can be applied two weekly if required.

In your vegetable gardens applications of **OrganiBOR, Rok Solid and Ocean Solids** should be applied before planting or spot used in the planting holes. (Only a little of each in the planting hole.

Other beneficial natural products include **Rapid Lime,** gypsum, dolomite, sheep pellets,

Bio Boost, BioPhos, blood & bone, compost etc. Do not apply the lime where you are going to grow tomatoes and potatoes.

If products are broadcast over an area, lightly rake over to mix into the soil.

A two weekly spray of MBL will also add value and health to your crops.

Don't forget to spray your strawberry plants every two weeks with Mycorrein for increased harvests of berries. MBL can be added to this spray if you like.

A busy time, so get gardening.

Problems ring me at 0800 466464 (Palmerston North 3570606)