

Gardening Articles for week ending 24<sup>th</sup> October 2015  
Written by Wally Richards.

## PLANT'S IMMUNITY

Plants, just like ourselves, have built in protection against diseases through immunity systems.

We build up our immunity naturally over the years by surviving disease attacks and by having a healthy nutritionally rich diet. That is not to say that we are immune to disease attacks but under normal situations we can fend off most health problems if we have very good health.

If we get into stress then our metabolism does not have the same stamina and we catch a cold or worse.

It is said the leading cause of heart disease and cancer is stress. I think it's the stress that is the straw that breaks the camels back, after unhealthy living and insufficient nutrient rich food.

The same applies to plants, place them into stress and they will more likely catch a disease.

I have written a lot in the past on how to build the health of plants by building the health of the soil; having soil that is rich in humus, minerals, earth worms and soil life. These past articles can be found on our web site at [www.gardenews.co.nz](http://www.gardenews.co.nz)

Even when we have the best soil on earth, plants can still catch a cold when they are placed into stress and our current spring weather is very stressful to our plants and to us keen gardeners.

Chilly winds, too wet, too dry, only the occasional nice day does not make for great gardening and our plants don't do so well either.

We can however increase the immune systems of plants by a few monthly sprays of Perkfection Supa for roses and other plants.

The active ingredient of Perkfection is 'Phosphite ion' or Phosphonic Acid. (Potassium ions are also present). Perkfection is very safe to handle and spray and when used on food crops there is no withholding period other than your normal washing of produce before eating.

Perkfection is used extensively by commercial growers of produce and fruit as it's safe, effective, in prevention and control while not restrictive on exports of produce.

We have suggested Perkfection Supa for Roses and Other Plants as an alternative to more toxic sprays, for the assistance in recovery from/or prevention of, the following problems,

Black spot, Downy Mildew, Phytophthora Root rot, botrytis, Canker, heart rot, damping off, crown rot, leaf blight, silver leaf, late blight, collar rot, pink rot, brown rot, Armillaria, and gummy stem rot.

Now that's a big list of common plant diseases which means that many of your disease

related problems can be overcome with applications of this product.

Besides using Perkfection over your roses for the likes of Black spot and Downy mildew you can also use it as a spray over all your fruiting plants and trees including your strawberries.

It can be used also over your potatoes, tomatoes, lettuce, beans, cucumbers (etc) lawns, onions, passion fruit, Cauliflowers, cybidium orchids and ornamental plants and vines.. In fact there is no where you cannot use Perkfection to advantage.

Being 'Synthetic Organic Phosphates' what you are doing, is placing this valuable material, onto the foliage of your plants, where it is very readily absorbed and transferred through the whole of the plant.

This fortifies the plant's cells, increases the plant's immune system and makes your plants less susceptible to invading pathogens.

There is however a down side, as with any good thing, you can use too much and the recommendation is to use Perkfection at 4 ml per litre of spray once a month for about 6 times in a season. (Note a season is the normal period of time for that crop or plant. Roses are from Spring till Autumn. Most annuals 5-6 months.)

The reason is that, you can over load your plant with organic phosphates causing a clogging of the cells and halting growth until the system clears.

If a plant has a problem spray the first month with Perkfection at 7 mls per litre.

For plants you wish to fortify use at 4ml per litre for 2 to 3 months.

Prevention is better than cure and by spraying your plants in the spring you give the greatest protection to leaves and fruit, autumn spray will give greatest protection to roots and tubers.

I have suggested that on the 1st of the month to spray your roses and other preferred plants with Perkfection, MBL (Magic Botanic Liquid) and Mycorrcin. Then 14 days later (15th) spray with Mycorrcin and MBL.

What we are doing is boosting the plant's immune system, supplying a large range of minerals and elements, feeding the beneficial microbes to increase their populations which also work to eliminate diseases.

If insects problems occur then include Wallys Neem Tree Oil with Key Pyrethrum added..

All these sprays are compatible.

Here are a few examples of situations where Perkfection Supa has made a big difference;

Buxus, from early damage to nearly dead plants, sprayed monthly the plants recovered their foliage and are now thriving after 6 months.

Silverleaf on roses and fruit trees caught in the earlier stages, remove damaged branches and spray with Perkfection.

Dry Berry on berry fruit including strawberries (other name is downy mildew) a couple of sprays usually does the trick.

Grapes spray once there is a good show of leaves then repeat monthly for about 3 times to assist in prevention of botrytis.

I have a guava tree which after several years of excellent fruiting it suddenly developed a disease that badly effected the fruit.

A few other gardeners also reported the same problem so I contacted the nursery that propagate the trees and asked the head nurseryman about it. He named the disease (which I forget what it was) and told me that they treat the problem with a chemical spray.

Knowing me fairly well he said that he did not know what I could use as I was against harmful chemicals.

So that season when the guava was starting to produce new growths in the spring I sprayed it with Perkfection and again every month of so while the fruit were growing.

The result was a tree full of fruit and no sign of the previous problem.

Wet weather diseases on citrus and plants that do not like wet feet can be helped to recover with the use of Perkfection. It will help stimulate new root development.

It would also be a good idea to clean up the rot in the roots with a soil drench of Terracin followed by a drench of Mycorrcin 3 weeks later.

Terracin is a natural product that suppresses pathogens in the soil allowing the beneficial microbes to increase which means there is a fight for food resources and the now large numbers of beneficial microbes win. Isn't life simple when you work with Nature instead of destroying it with man made chemicals.