

Gardening Articles for week ending 30th MAY 2015

Written by Wally Richards.

WINTER READY YOUR GLASSHOUSE AND ROSES

So far this winter it has been much milder than what we would normally expect, which is nice on one hand but not so good in regards to garden pests and diseases.

If the weather remains similar through till after July it can mean a lot more problems in the spring unless we take some preventive actions now.

Lets start off with those of us that are fortunate to have a glasshouse and what we can do to control pests and diseases in the house while it is empty of plants.

A number of gardeners like to sterilise the soil if they use soil in their glasshouse rather than a concrete floor with containers for growing.

Potassium permanganate can be used to kill fungus diseases in the soil and sprayed around the glasshouse for the same reason.

What you do is mix $\frac{3}{4}$ a teaspoon of potassium permanganate with 3 tablespoons of salt (Ocean Solids)

into a litre of hot water to dissolve and then add that to a further 9 litres of water.

Using a watering can, liberally water into the soil which should be moist prior to using but not wet.

The 10 litres can be applied over 5 to 10 sq M of soil dependent about how concerned you are on diseases. The heavier the dose the greater the result (within reason)

Leave for about a week then lightly water the soil to water in deeper, a few days later give another watering, leave for a week then give the soil a good drench.

The 10 litres made up can be also placed into a back pack sprayer and with the nozzle turn to make a jet

spray all the crevices between panes of glass and elsewhere that disease spores maybe lurking.

If you have moss, liverwort or molds inside or outside of the glasshouse then firstly spray them with Wallys Moss & Liverwort Control. When they have died back blast them off with a jet of water. When its dried out spray the potassium permanganate mix then you can treat the soil as mentioned above..

If you have containers that you use for growing in the glasshouse these should be emptied into the compost bin or onto gardens and the containers sterilised with the potassium permanganate.

After these treatments for diseases then its time to treat for insect pests. Sprinkle Wallys Neem Tree

Granules over the soil at 100 grams per SqM and lightly water.

Next obtain some Sulphur (yellow stuff called sublime Sulphur or flowers of Sulphur) this is an old trick I just learnt recently from a gardener; you burn the sulphur in the glasshouse with all the vents and door closed. The amount you burn would depend on the size of the house and in larger glasshouses maybe more than one burning at the same time.

To burn I found the easy way was to place about a 100 grams of sulphur onto a steel hearth shovel and light it with a flame weed burner that I have and once burning nicely get out of the house as it can be suffocating. Alternative would be to have hot burning coals that you sprinkle the Sulphur onto.

I remember as a child that when there were diseases such as flu around we would burn a small amount of Sulphur sprinkled on hot coals carried on the hearth shovel through the house to kill the air borne diseases.

Maybe worth remembering if there is a plague happening.

Don't burn the Sulphur in the glasshouse if there are plants growing as it will kill some plants, I tried it and some plants survived where others died. It certainly killed a lot of whitefly and psyllid as they could be seen beating against the panes of glass trying to get out.

Be very careful and maybe if you are not sure light the Sulphur outside of the glasshouse and once burning place into the centre of the house and get out quickly.

In the garden any sign of yellowing leaves you should start sprinkling Fruit and Flower Power in the root zone to supply the magnesium needed and the potash to harden up the plants. Repeat monthly.

More frost tender plants should be sprayed with Vaporgard to give them frost protection down to minus 3 for 3 months from one application.

I have successfully kept Impatiens and petunias growing through the winter for about 3 years which saves money in not having to replace each year. The plants should also be in a semi-protected situation to help ensure they can survive. If it looks like two or more frosts in a row then frost cloth or additional protection will be needed.

Vaporgard works well for the occasional frost a few days apart.

I have also kept tomatoes, potatoes, tree tomatoes, banana plants and palms happy and growing with its protection during milder winters.

Roses are always a bit of a problem when the winter is mild as they stay in foliage and can still produce a few flowers off and on.

The milder the climate the less chance of them having a much needed winter rest.

If they do not have a dormant period in winter they will not perform as well next season.

A good hard frost will do the trick but you can also force them to rest.

For Bush or Standard roses about now or in early June cut the canes back to half their length, remove any spindly wood and dead wood. Pick up the the rubbish and send to the tip or bury in a garden.

I don't advise putting into the compost as they take sometime to break down and the thorns are not nice.

If you have a chipper then after chipping they can go into the compost.

Next spray the remaining canes with Lime Sulphur to burn off any foliage and kill diseases and pests that are remaining.

Leave for about a month and then spray the canes with potassium permanganate at the rate of $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ a teaspoon per litre of water. The soil surrounding the roses should be sprayed also.

Note both Lime Sulphur and Potassium permanganate can stain so if against the house or a wall it would pay to place a sheet behind to prevent staining.

The stains will weather off but may last for some time.

The roses will then have a rest and be ready for pruning at end of July.

With climbing roses either cut off or tie back branches that are in the way; cut out any diseased or old dead canes and then you can treat with the above sprays if you wish.

Keep the weeds down in your gardens by weeding regularly so they don't seed and make for a bigger problem.