



STARNOTE 120

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UNDERSTANDING HORTICULTURAL/ DORMANT OIL & FUNGICIDE SPRAY TIMINING:

A Key to Success

Protect Your Rose Garden & Orchard: The Importance of Dormant Sprays

Laying the groundwork for a healthy garden starts with a strong defense against pests and diseases. Dormant spraying is crucial in safeguarding your trees and roses from potential threats. Applying both specific treatments simultaneously during the tree's dormant period allows you to effectively control a range of overwintering pests and diseases. This guide will equip you with the knowledge to protect your valuable plants and ensure a bountiful harvest.

Essential Dormant Sprays and Their Applications

Horticultural/Dormant Oil Spray:

- **Timing:** Apply during the dormant stage (late fall and early spring) and repeat as needed based on weather conditions.
- **Benefits:** It controls overwintering insect eggs (aphids, leaf rollers, scale, mites, pear psylla, (whitefly) and caterpillar egg sacs.
- **Application:** Thoroughly cover all sides of branches and bark until runoff.
- **Cautions:** Avoid applying when temperatures fall below freezing. Never apply when temperatures exceed 85°F.

Copper Fungicide:

- **Timing:** Apply in late autumn or early winter and a second application at the end of January. Ideally, the best time to apply is when daytime temperatures are expected to rise above 40°F.
- **Benefits:** Controls powdery mildew, bacterial canker, brown rot blossom, and fruit spot on stone fruits. It is also effective against scabs, fireblight, and rust on pome fruits.
- **Cautions:** Follow label instructions carefully, including application rates and timing.

By combining the power of copper fungicide and horticultural oil, you can create a potent defense against a range of overwintering pests and diseases. For optimal results, mix both products according to label instructions and apply them together in a pump/tank sprayer or separately in a hose-end sprayer. This combined approach provides comprehensive protection for your trees and rose bushes. Remember to thoroughly cover all branches and foliage, ensuring the spray solution is evenly distributed.

Additional Tips

To enhance your garden's overall health, remember to combine dormant spraying with essential care practices:

- **Pruning:** Remove diseased or damaged branches during the dormant season.
- **Cleanup:** Clear away fallen leaves and debris to reduce harborage for pests and diseases.
- **Proper Watering:** Maintain adequate soil moisture without overwatering.
- **Fertilization:** Provide essential nutrients for healthy growth.
- **Preventative Measures:** In addition to spraying, practice good cultural practices, such as pruning out diseased branches, cleaning up fallen leaves, and proper watering.
- **Monitor for Pests and Diseases:** Regular inspections can help you identify problems early and take appropriate action.
- **Label Instructions:** Always read and follow the label instructions for any pesticide product.
- **Safety First:** Wear protective gear when applying sprays, such as gloves, goggles, and a mask.

Implementing these practices alongside dormant spraying will create a strong foundation for a thriving garden.

Here's a breakdown of key stages for various fruit trees:

- **Dormant:** Trees are completely dormant with no visible signs of growth.
- **Bud Swell:** Buds begin to increase in size but remain closed.
- **Green Tip:** A small green tip emerges from the bud.
- **Delayed Dormant:** Between bud swell and green tip.
- **Pop Corn:** Buds resemble small popcorn kernels.
- **Full Pink/White:** Blossom buds open, showing pink or white color.
- **Petal Fall:** Blossom petals have fallen off.
- **Shuck Split:** The outer covering of the fruit begins to split open.
- **Ripe Fruit:** The fruit reaches its mature stage.

Note: Timing can vary based on local climate conditions.

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