

## Can You Dig It?

By Schann Nelson  
OSU Master Gardener



Imagine my surprise and delight when I read in the extension newsletter, Country Living, that I could use part of a long article I wrote in September about spraying for fungal diseases, NOW. "Peach Leaf curl finds its way into the buds on your peach tree this month and in January. Prevent the problem by spraying completely and often with lime sulfur or copper. Four separate sprays are ideal. Temperatures should be well above freezing when you spray. Two to three hours of drying time is ideal. With copper fungicides, use a spreader-sticker if the label calls for one. While you're at it, spray your apples, cherries, blueberries and boysen/marion berries. Both sprays are considered organic".

Though incredibly hard to figure out based on reading labels and publications, I believe most of our gardens would benefit from an application of fungicide. The object is to interrupt the life cycle of the wide variety of fungi-based diseases we are blessed with. I say blessed because they play a huge role in turning the growth of summers past into soil. However, some of the fungi make ugly fruit and some will kill your trees if left untreated. Applying fungicide can dramatically reduce fungal diseases like black spot and powdery mildew. This is a personal choice you need to base on your tolerance for these disease problems and what methods you are willing or able to effect.

There are several products on the market suitable for application by organic farmers, including botanical oils (such as neem and jojoba), copper mineral powder and lime sulfur. If you begin in the fall, wait until after fruit is harvested. When spraying, be sure to coat as much of the leaf surface, top and bottom, as possible. This late in the season there aren't many leaves to coat, but be sure to get coverage on ALL surfaces. Spraying leaves left on the ground is somewhat effective and will also help control moss (if you are using copper). Oils, including dormant oil, are not compatible with sulfur. Spraying with an oil-based product should be separated by at least two weeks from spraying a mineral product. Repeat application of fungicide, an application of dormant oil or combination products containing insecticides and fungicides will help provide control. Some deadly and resistant diseases (such as peach leaf curl mentioned above) require multiple sprays to be effective.

As always, follow safety directions carefully regarding application of ANY product.

Labels will tell you which plants you MAY apply a particular product to/on and if it is toxic to others. However, the labels also try to tell you what month or season to apply some products as in 'apply in the second week of February and again in early March'. We may well be having a false spring at the specified time! Even a few consecutive days of 60 degree sunny weather will make sap start to rise and buds to break in many plants, long before freezing weather is over for the year. It's almost dependable that we will have a couple of nice weeks of lovely weather in February. Application of a dormant product at that time could exacerbate problems created by premature growth.

Unfortunately, it can be very difficult to assign a specific date to any given season, or a season to any given date for that matter, in our little corner of the planet. It was hard for me to determine when my trees were fully dormant. There were leaves still attached to the top tips of branches when I decided it was time to dormant spray and begin pruning in February last year. I apologize for being vague but we can, and do, have warm days in winter and cold, wet days in summer, sometimes for unseasonably long stretches.

I use label directions first to identify the least toxic control for the pest or disease I have identified as requiring intervention, and second to find out what plants I do NOT want to get product on. The timing recommendations, however, I view as more of a guideline. Terms such as leaf fall, after harvest, pre- or post- bloom, and dormant are more helpful.

After last month's column about unwelcome guests in your home, I realized I probably didn't provide enough explanation about how to keep them out or get them out. One reason I like long-acting, contact insecticides is that I can apply them in the fall when there is still lots of good air circulation, and they remain effective through the winter when I wouldn't want to apply poisons (either chemical or 'organic') in my house. I have found it very effective to thoroughly spray behind furniture, along baseboards, in the back of cupboards and other such places to reduce the number of carpenter ants. I use the ants as an indicator species for when its time to reapply. It's a bonus that these products are effective for a wide range of insect pests, including fleas.



It remains true that cleanliness is important, especially to control fleas and lice. Really good vacuuming of carpets and furniture is an essential step to removing both the insects brought into the house and their eggs. Be sure to vacuum slowly enough to PUULL stuff out of the carpet and into the bag. Beds can also be vacuumed. If you want to apply an insecticide to a mattress, start early in the day to allow plenty of time for it to dry and then flip the mattress so that you will not come into contact with it. This is a pretty extreme method but may be what it takes to eliminate fleas or lice. A less extreme method is to use a very hot steam iron over the entire surface (after vacuuming).

Don't freak out! **Anybody can get head lice!** Almost everybody will at some point in their life, especially if you have kids in school. It's not about you or how clean your house and children are. These are highly evolved insects adept at survival and spread. An effective insecticide shampoo is available with a doctor's prescription. Manual removal of egg cases (nits) from hair is tedious but essential. Use the time to get closer to others in your life. Other hints: Don't forget to treat the car – or anyplace else you rest your weary head. Freezing suspected hideouts like pillows, stuffed animals, shoes, hats and wool blankets is effective if you leave stuff in long enough – at least a week – but takes up a lot of space. WASH everything you can in HOT water and dry in a HOT dryer.

Still time to plant spring bulbs or garlic. Don't delay!

If the lawn is frozen, stay off it!

Wrap paper around newly planted trees to avoid sun damage.

Check stored bulbs and vegetables for rot and fungus, get rid of any showing signs. Remember not to let them get too dry.

Bring the fragrant tree inside and enjoy the closing of the year.

I hope your holidays are filled with good food and good friends.



## Church Directory

### NEHALEM VALLEY BIBLE CHURCH

Gary Taylor, Pastor  
Grant & North Streets, Vernonia  
503 429-5378  
Sunday School 10:00 a.m.  
Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.  
Nursery available  
Wednesday Service 7:00 p.m.

### VERNONIA FOURSQUARE CHURCH

Carl Pense, Pastor  
850 Madison Avenue, Vernonia  
503 429-1103  
Sunday Worship Service: 10:30 a.m.  
Children's Sunday School

### CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS

Marc Farmer, Branch President  
1350 E. Knott Street, Vernonia  
503 429-7151  
Sacrament Meeting, Sunday 10 a.m.  
Sunday School & Primary 11:20 a.m.  
Relief Society, Priesthood and  
Young Women, Sunday 12:10 p.m.

### SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST

Gary S. Walter, Pastor  
2nd Ave. and Nehalem St., Vernonia  
503 429-8301  
Morning Worship, 11:00 a.m.  
Sabbath School 9:30 a.m.

### ASSEMBLY OF GOD

Wayne and Maureen Marr  
662 Jefferson Ave., Vernonia,  
503 429-0373  
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.  
Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.

### VERNONIA CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Sam Hough, Evangelist  
410 North Street, Vernonia  
503 429-6522  
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.  
Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.  
Every Wednesday:  
Ladies' Bible Study 9:30 a.m.  
Ladies' Worship 10:00 a.m.  
Children's Choir 3:00 p.m.  
Family Bible Study 7:00 p.m.

### FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

359 "A" Street, Vernonia  
503 429-5190  
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.  
Sunday Worship Service 11:00 a.m.  
Wednesday Prayer Meeting 7:00 p.m.

### ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

Rev. Luan Tran, Administrator  
960 Missouri Avenue, Vernonia  
503 429-8841  
Mass Sunday 12:00 Noon  
Religious Educ. Sunday 10:30 a.m.

### VERNONIA COMMUNITY CHURCH

Grant Williams, Pastor  
957 State Avenue, Vernonia  
503 429-6790  
Sunday Breakfast 9:00 a.m.  
Morning Worship 9:45 a.m.  
Children and Nursery 10:00 a.m.  
Youth Group 6:00 p.m.  
Preschool Mon. & Wed. 9:00 a.m.  
Wednesday Prayer 6:00 p.m.  
Tues. & Fri. Adult Volleyball 7:00 p.m.

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