

Can You Dig It?

By Schann Nelson
Columbia County Master Gardener



In this cold and dreary time I have great trouble manifesting the chores I know need to be done into reality. Perhaps, if I begin with a brief outline of what needs to be done it will motivate me to accomplish. More likely it will serve as a list of stuff to remember to do before winter, most of which won't get done.

Clean up perennial beds and mulch to clear working area under larger shrubs and trees.

Prune excess growth on established landscape and fruit trees to shape winter growth.

Remove any remaining pome (apples, pears, and quinces) fruit.

Determine if fungal diseases such as black spot, scab or powdery mildew are present. [More later.]

Find all the garden tools. Dry, clean, oil and sharpen as necessary.

Continue shaping garden beds by raking dirt upheavals (from the moles who come to eat the worms) and other material that migrates into what you want to be pathways.

In the likely event that one or more of the fungal diseases IS present, decide what level of disease you can tolerate and how much resource you can put into disease control. All of these options were selected from the 2004 edition of *Least Toxic and Organic Pesticides for Gardeners*, OSU Extension Master Gardener Program. An exception is this note about neem: Neem oil has become very popular as a broad spectrum fungicide and insecticide. I've found it effective, but expensive and terrible tasting, though it advertises that you can use it up to the day of harvest. Now I save it for indoor infestations of spider mites and white flies.

In the past, I've sprayed dormant oil over all the leaves I could find on the ground, trying to hit that 'dor-

mant' period, but without early pruning and shaping. This year, I'd like to hack away at overgrowth now, and spray a low toxicity product such as lime sulfur (calcium polysulfide) mixed with a horticultural oil (may be petroleum-, fish- or vegetable-based) before putting up the Christmas lights, instead of after. Since I have so many plants that harbor fungal diseases over the winter, AND if I were very concerned about further significant disease reduction, I might consider a second or even third spray before spring. Also I haven't sprayed anything other than summer oil for a couple of years.

One of the trickier things to unravel is the mechanism of action of the products available. Since you are actively trying to disrupt the life cycle of your target pest, knowing when it's most vulnerable can make treatments more effective. For instance, horticultural oils work by smothering mites, eggs and insects, but degrade rapidly, thus are pretty much effective for insects and mites only if you get a direct hit. However, they also provide an anti-fungal protective effect by physically disrupting fungi, interfering with attachment to the host, and destroying fungal cell walls. This makes both the heavier dormant oils and the lighter summer weight oils an attractive weapon with very low toxicity. If I add lime sulfur, I can expand the spectrum of diseases affected with a contact poison that will continue to work along with the oil. Later, in the winter, I could follow up with a copper spray to use up the chemicals I have on hand. This stuff is described as "highly toxic to humans and fish through ingestion or inhalation" so I'll have to suit up completely. It further extends my arsenal to include a bactericide. It kills spores by disrupting enzymes, so should have an extended period of action.

Be aware that the word "organic" on a pesticide label means almost nothing. Read the fine print to make sure you are getting the least toxic product that you want and not something else. *Of course, you will follow all package directions in regard to safe application of any product you choose.* It's nice that so many things are available, premixed and ready to use for homes

and gardens.

You may notice that my spraying schedule diverges wildly from what you might read on a product label, particularly a dormant oil spray. I really am saying, start NOW! You'll have a hard enough time finding a day that meets the necessary criteria: reasonably sunny and dry, calm and not windy, well above freezing, and when you have the time, the equipment and the energy to do it! Beyond those mundane considerations, we simply do not share a climate with most of the rest of the country. There is always something growing, usually growing a lot, in every season. Recommendations that assume a dormant winter period when everything is frozen and sere, are difficult to interpret at best, and often simply don't apply.

Spraying things in your yard has gotten a bad rep — with a little attention it can be an easy and effective way to encourage the environment, wherever your small corner of earth is. If it sounds like I spray all the time it is only because I am writing about what I COULD do if I had the resources and the desire. Since the sun has actually come out for the first time in days I think I'm going to go prune or rake or, yes, possibly even SPRAY something!

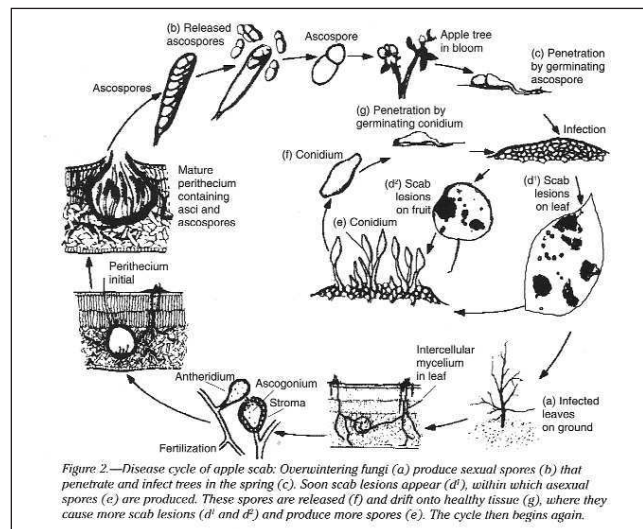


Figure 2.—Disease cycle of apple scab: Overwintering fungi (a) produce sexual spores (b) that penetrate and infect trees in the spring (c). Soon scab lesions appear (d), within which asexual spores (e) are produced. These spores are released (f) and drift onto healthy tissue (g), where they cause more scab lesions (d' and d'') and produce more spores (e). The cycle then begins again.

Want to play in the snow? Get a Sno-Park permit before you go

As fall quickly turns to winter, it's time to prepare for your favorite winter activities.

Oregon's Sno-Park program helps provide snow removal at about 100 winter recreation parking areas (Sno-Parks) across the state. Sno-Parks exist in most of Oregon's mountain passes and in most ski, snowmobile and snow play areas. A list of areas designated as Sno-Parks is available at www.tripcheck.com under "Travel Center."

If you park in a Sno-Park between November 1 and April 30, you need a valid Sno-Park permit displayed in the windshield of your vehicle.

There are three types of permits: a \$25 seasonal permit, a \$9 three-day permit good for three consecutive days, and a \$4 daily permit. All DMV offices

and permit agents at winter resorts, sporting goods stores and other retail outlets sell these permits. Private agents can charge an additional service fee. A list of permit agents is available at www.tripcheck.com under "Travel Center." To become a Sno-Park permit sales agent contact DMV, Vehicle Mail at 503-945-7949.

The seasonal permit also is available by mail from DMV. Send a written request with your return address, phone number, and a check or money order to DMV, Vehicle Mail No. 1, 1905 Lana Avenue, Salem OR 97314.

Parking in an Oregon Sno-Park without a permit may result in a fine, so be sure to obtain a permit and display it on your vehicle.

Church Directory

VERNONIA FOURSQUARE CHURCH

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

SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST

Larry Gibson, 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.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

359 "A" Street, Vernonia
503 429-4027
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

957 State Avenue, Vernonia
503 429-6790
Sunday Worship 9:45 a.m.
Children's Church (Blast!) 10:15 a.m.
Nursery 10:15 a.m.
High School Youth 6:00 p.m.
Wednesday Prayer 6:00 p.m.
Preschool: Open House soon

VERNONIA CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Sam Hough, Minister
410 North Street, Vernonia
503 429-6522
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
Sunday Worship 11:00 a.m.
(meets in Youth & Family Center)
Home Group Meeting throughout
the week at various locations

PIONEER BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP

John Cahill, Pastor
939 Bridge Street, Vernonia
503-429-1161
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.
Thursday Prayer 7:00 p.m.

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.

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.