



Spraying with softened water

Posted by [Peter Fisher](#)

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[Peter Fisher](#)

[Spraying with softened water](#)

April 24, 2018 02:43AM

Registered: 10 years ago

Posts: 82

I am getting really tired of dealing with congealing neem oil. Now I find that it has coated the upper portions of my sprayer tank (I have a 25 gallon tank with a 12 volt ShurFlo pump) and the intake and agitator tubes, along with the insides of the plastic pipe and fittings and presumably the pump and the entire length of my sprayer hose (because it was at the nozzle) with a coating of light tan grease, which has turned black in some places. It does not come off just with Citra Solv, even with the pressure from a hose nozzle. It has to be scrubbed. And it got to the point that it clogged up the sprayer, which required disassembling everything and cleaning it out with bottle brushes and rags.

I have hard well water. And it is cold of course, and the air is cold. Lots of Dr Bonner's soap, lemon juice as recommended by the Ahimsa folks, warming the water ahead of time in pails to about 65 degrees, all not enough. So my question is: Can I spray with warmish, softened water instead of well water? That is what I will be using to clean it from now on (which is a pain, because I can't use a hose then).

Turkey Creek Orchard

Solon, Iowa (zone 5A)

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[Pat McBride](#)

[Re: Spraying with softened water](#)

May 01, 2018 05:47PM

Registered: 6 years ago

Posts: 6

My well water is extremely hard with lots of iron in it, so I have been using softened water for my spraying. As far as I can tell, this hasn't had a downside other than extra volume through the softener system. I run a hose from the basement and fill the sprayer tank with about 2/3 cold softened water, let it warm for a while, and then fill it with hot water before adding neem, etc. I am guessing the water ends up being warmer than 65 degrees, which helps keep things from cooling off enough for the neem to congeal. I have not had a problem with neem congealing with this approach, but I'm pretty diligent to run hot water with Citrasolv through the system right after I spray, and then a good rinse with more hot water. I use Ecover dishwashing liquid with the neem, and it might also help that I use a sprayer with mechanical agitation to keep everything mixed up (a Rears 50 gallon Pull-Tank I found used for a good price last year). I hope this helps.

Pat McBride

Twin Oaks Orchard

Zone 4b in Minnesota

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[Peter Fisher](#)

[Re: Spraying with softened water](#)

May 02, 2018 03:56AM

Registered: 10 years ago

Posts: 82

Thanks. My reservations about softened water arose from the understanding that it contains salts, which I presumed might not be good for trees. Glad to hear you have not had problems.

I sprayed last weekend following pretty much the same procedure, with good results as far as neem residue and tank cleaning. I will have to put a hose connector on my basement sink so I don't have to lug 5 gallon pails of tap water to pour in the sprayer. I will use this procedure at least until the weather gets hot and I can let the well water warm up outside, and can be sure it will stay above 70 degrees while spraying.

Turkey Creek Orchard

Solon, Iowa (zone 5A)

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