



Under scrutiny

Posted by [James Smith](#)

[Forum List](#) [Message List](#) [New Topic](#)

[James Smith](#)

[Under scrutiny](#)

May 05, 2021 07:10AM

Registered: 2 years ago

Posts: 57

Last week I was sitting in my house, minding my own business, when the doorbell rang. There was a neighbouring conventional orchardist and her husband. "What's going on with your orchard?" she asked. I told her Jose (my former orchardist) had quit, so I was taking over the orchard, that I was switching to a holistic practice, and told them what I was spraying. We exchanged phone numbers and all seemed well.

My doorbell rang again today as I was readying myself for my paying job. The fellow at the door identified himself as from the pest control board and that a complaint had been filed against me by one of my neighbours. I told him I had spoke with my neighbours about what I was doing, and he asked if the lady aforementioned was one of them. Yes. Well, she's the one who filed the complaint. So I proceeded to explain what I was doing, what my plans were for the orchard, I even showed him the drum of neem oil I had, which he took a picture of. He was decent enough, and explained that since a complaint had been made he would have to put up a couple of coddling moth traps and monitor my orchard for the season. If everything is kept under control he could close it. Otherwise we'd be having more discussions. I assured him I was not going to let the orchard go neglected, I would be doing my best and work with him.

Well I knew I was up for a challenge, jumping into the deep end for a trial by fire. I had no idea it would be under a microscope. I'll do my best to make the team proud, and keep Michael's inscription he wrote in the book he sent me in mind daily, which was "You can do this!"

At least I learned who my neighbours are...

Washington Okanogan Valley

Zone 6b

[Reply](#) [Quote](#)

[Chris Vlitas](#)

[Re: Under scrutiny](#)

May 05, 2021 10:07PM

Edited for brevity

Registered: 10 years ago

Posts: 47

Edited 1 time(s). Last edit at 09/30/2022 05:35PM by Chris Vlitas.

[Reply](#) [Quote](#)

[Michael Phillips](#)

[Re: Under scrutiny](#)

May 06, 2021 01:45AM

Moderator

Registered: 11 years ago

Posts: 621

So much ignorance and so little time, eh? The ones who should be under scrutiny are your neighbors who are spraying chemical toxins that kill life. We are at the tipping point on blessed earth. Without question, the chemical regime must end now. Insects are disappearing, birds are disappearing, ecosystems are crashing hard. Exploring health-focused alternatives is part of the path by which our own species *may* survive. Not that I'm particularly optimistic... but it's people like you, James, who are keeping the flame burning. We are currently fighting for the rights of the next seven generations to have a hospitable planet. And I'm apparently not in the mood to mince words this evening.

[Lost Nation Orchard](#)

Zone 4b in New Hampshire

[Reply](#) [Quote](#)

[Brittany Kordick](#)

[Re: Under scrutiny](#)

May 07, 2021 02:18PM

Registered: 4 years ago

Posts: 211

While it sounds like your neighbors ought to go back to grade school to pick up some pointers on how to make friends, I, for one, can certainly relate to their concerns. A few years ago we were dismayed when the all but abandoned 100 acres or so behind our orchard (and only accessible from our land via a farm road easement) suddenly sprouted a tiny orchard of apples and pear trees. It was planted and subsequently more or less left completely alone, and is situated perfectly with the prevailing winds, which continue straight into our orchard. Relations with this set of neighbors were never good (due to their perceived abuse of the farm road easement, in our estimation), and are now worse than ever. The girl who planted the orchard is under the delusion that good organic management means you never spray

or do the least thing to your orchard, and I have been accosted by her for spraying, among other things, Surround. Happily, relation-wise, she has ceased to set foot in her orchard, but you know, sometimes we wonder how much disease pressure we can thank her for providing us.

With all the worries of an orchardist in spring, the idea of having to add more regulatory scrutiny to your concerns just flat-out sucks, and I hate it for you, James. And yet, if the tables were turned, if holistic orchardists had a pest control board of some ilk to call, how many of us would be happy to call it when someone next door to our orchard started spraying conventional chemicals? Sorry, I just get tired of the ever-escalating "You're evil" -- "Well, you're more evil" discourse that has pervaded every aspect of life. We have good relations with the conventional orchardists we know in the area. It allows for conversation, education, and understanding. It's easy to think they're absolutely wrong and the enemy, but try not to forget that they think just the same of us. Walking a mile in someone else's shoes is often not a bad idea.

[Kordick Family Farm](#)

Westfield, NC

Zone 7a

[Reply Quote](#)

[Mike Biltonen](#)

[Re: Under scrutiny](#)

May 07, 2021 03:11PM

Registered: 10 years ago

Posts: 298

First, you work it out as neighbors. You don't call in the pest gestapo (and I am not saying you did, just speaking generally here and to James' situation). Second, I doubt your or anyone else's disease pressure comes solely (or even mostly) from a neighboring abandoned orchard. We live in a world out of balance and most - if not all - of the imbalance is caused (in our cases) by conventional agriculture. How many deleterious pesticides can I name that are still legal to use that will have lasting impacts? How many outlawed insecticides are still having an impact on the environment? If, in fact, there was a "holistic pest management board" then maybe there could be a level playing field. But there isn't. So we do what we do the best we can. There is this perception that unless you bomb it with pesticides there is no other way. But we're not calling the EPA on every blind faith conventional grower out there, are we? Unless you're in lock step, then you are the enemy. Trying to get conventional growers to lay off the neonics even a little is akin to heresy. But we have no one to "go to" since the EPA and DEC and pest control boards are just fronts for industry. The only way to restore balance and neighborliness is to work together, holistically, and to recognize the shortcomings we are all dealing with. I have a friend who lives in Texas in a neighborhood with a neighborhood association with rules and guidelines. He is trying to rewild his lawn with pollinator friendly plants and edible crops - all in a permaculture-style design. Unfortunately, his HOA doesn't like this because they're actually being successful in eradicating Bermudagrass and replacing it with peaches, and persimmons, and figs, and kale. Instead of understanding what he is doing and why and how it benefits everyone, they are threatening action against him. Yes, he could move, but that's not the point. The point is there is a one-size fits all, top down mentality that is being forced on us all and that's got to cease. Instead of understanding, let's try to work together first - then call in the A Team.

[Mike Biltonen, Know Your Roots](#)

Zone 5b in New York

Edited 1 time(s). Last edit at 05/07/2021 03:12PM by Mike Biltonen.

[Reply Quote](#)

[Newer Topic Older Topic](#)

[Print View RSS](#)

Sorry, only registered users may post in this forum.

[Click here to login](#)

This [forum](#) is powered by [Phorum](#).