



Using neem as dormant oil spray

Posted by [gloria bell](#)

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[gloria bell](#)

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January 30, 2020 08:18PM

Registered: 5 years ago

Posts: 20

In the past I've used dormant oil (labelled as such) but haven't been able to source it. I have neem oil and love what it does in the orchard. Can I use 1% or 2% concentration as a dormant spray in January/feb before bud swell? I normally shoot for three application during the dormant season, I didn't get to fall sprays as it just wouldn't stop raining...

Suggestions always welcomed

Zone 8:

Vancouver Island, BC

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[Isa Campbell](#)

[Re: Using neem as dormant oil spray](#)

March 11, 2020 04:49AM

Registered: 6 years ago

Posts: 7

Also interested in this question as I am prepping to spray copper (Cupro 5000) and dormant oil. Have two gallons of pure neem oil and wonder of potential drawbacks or benefits of the neem vs. something like Bonide All Seasons oil. Or a homemade dormant oil.

Does the horticultural oil have a specific viscosity that is more effective at 'smothering'? Additionally, is one superior as a 'sticker' for other compounds - like copper?

Vineyard Hills Community Orchard

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Zone 6a in Wheeling, WV

Edited 1 time(s). Last edit at 03/11/2020 05:06AM by Isa Campbell.

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[Michael Phillips](#)

[Re: Using neem as dormant oil spray](#)

March 11, 2020 02:44PM

Moderator

Registered: 11 years ago

Posts: 621

Bud swell through green tip applications are made for an array of reasons. This *Start Me Up* phase is detailed in the [June 2018 edition](#) of *Community Orchardist*. That's the framework to continue this discussion.

Dormant oil is petroleum-based, applied typically at 2% concentration. It's use is to smother tiny insect eggs and to help spread copper grains into twig lesions (this can be at a lower rate if scale is not an issue). There is essentially no nutrient contribution from a petroleum-based product. Horticultural oils will be less expensive than quality seed oils.

It's been like 20 years since I used dormant oil. Mites and even aphids just are not a problem if you don't spray broad-spectrum toxins and you create diverse habitat. That said I applied a single tank mix to older trees in the North Block in 2019 where scale has been making inroads. I am going to repeat that this year again for the same reason. Meanwhile the trees in the South Block are dealing with the leaf phase of black rot and that soil could use some copper . . . so another tank mix will be directed accordingly, this time Kocide copper with a lesser rate of dormant oil. I don't envision repeating either in 2021 but first have to see what this season brings.

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Zone 4b in New Hampshire

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