

Gardening Question and Answer

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Q. I sprayed my peach and plum tree with Neem oil at the rate of one tablespoon per gallon of water as the label required. Unfortunately, the leaves wilted and dropped off. What could have happened?

A. The only thing that I can think of is that you used the same sprayer for herbicide and it did not get rinsed out well enough after the use. It is best to have one sprayer for herbicides and another sprayer for other products. It is common to have a herbicide residue cause the problem you describe.

Q. What tomato varieties should we plant to insure that the crop is produced before it gets too hot for fruit to set. Last year we used our favorite varieties Big Boy, Brandywine, and Cherokee Purple without much success.

A. Use semi-determinate selections that grow quickly to full size and then concentrate on setting fruit. Among the recommended varieties are Tycoon, Valley Girl, 444, 602, Red Deuce, Phoenix, Sunbrite, and Celebrity. For cherry tomatoes use Ruby Crush and BHN 968.

Q. The cut ants removed all the leaves from my roses last year and prevented much of the bloom. How can I control them this year? We see they are moving this direction.

A. It usually works to block their paths with acephate ridges that force them to wade through the insecticide. Make two or three of the roadblocks across their trail 1.5 feet across. The ants that wade through will die, and the balance of the population will seek other feeding sources.

Q. It has come to my attention that you have prepared a lawn care schedule for the whole year. How would we obtain a copy of it? We bought our first home this year and have a lawn to care for the first time. It is overwhelming, we don't know where to start.

A. I will email the schedule to readers that send me a request by email. My address is calvinfinch@gmail.com.

Q. Which are the shade trees that grow the fastest? I am getting along in years and don't want to wait forever for some shade!

A. I am sure you mean, "What are high quality shade trees that grow at a fast rate?". Texas red oak, Mexican white oak and Mexican sycamore are all shade trees that grow at a fast rate and are relatively disease and pest free. They are also long lived and structurally sound.