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NEEM OIL –

By Dr. Moon

In my garden, I always seek a safe, non-toxic insecticide and fungicide that can be used without worrying about adverse side effects. I always prefer organic when possible, and I was one happy gardener when I found Neem Oil. This product, derived from the Neem Tree, is safe for vegetables and fruit trees and nearly non-toxic to birds, fish, bees, and wildlife when applied. Most importantly, it is effective. It is my “go-to” insecticide and fungicide for my landscape and garden.

Neem oil is an oil pressed from the fruits and seeds of the neem tree. This evergreen tree is endemic to the Indian subcontinent but has been introduced to many areas of the tropics. It has been used in soaps, oils, and organic cosmetics for years. If Neem is appropriately applied, it is nearly non-toxic to birds, fish, bees, and wildlife. Studies have shown no cancer or other disease-causing results from its use.

As a natural insecticide, Neem Oil controls a wide range of pests, including aphids, mealy bugs, scale, whiteflies, mites, ants, fleas, ticks, fruit flies, snails, slugs, caterpillars, webworms, squash bugs, and beetles.

As a natural fungicide, it effectively manages a variety of diseases such as rust, powdery mildew and other mildews, scab, black spots, anthracnose, leaf spots, botrytis, needle rust, blight, and Alternaria.

This comprehensive coverage gives me the confidence that my garden is in good hands with Neem Oil.



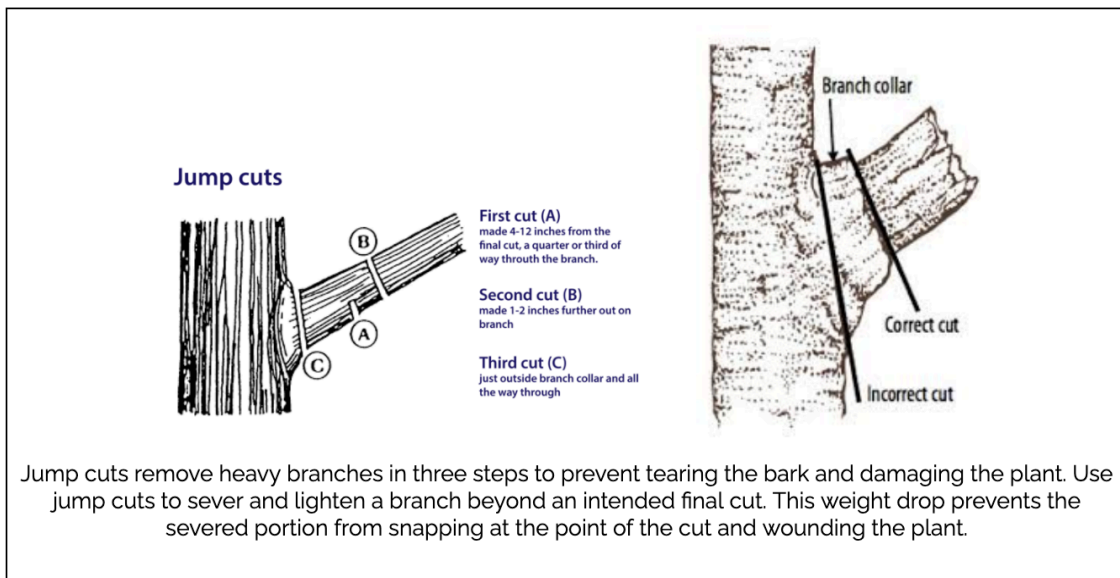
To sum it up, Neem Oil-

- It is easy to purchase at your local garden center or home improvement store
 - Organic
 - Safe for ALL plant materials
 - Safe for the environment
 - Easy to use- apply to all plant materials for control of insects, mites, and many diseases
 - It kills pesky ants and prevents them from coming back
 - It is a preferred treatment for aphids
 - It can stop the spread of the fungal disease, such as powdery mildew and leaf spots
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Cooler Temperatures Coming Soon!

It's time to prepare your outdoor areas for winter before the cold weather settles in. Let's review the final checklist to make spring yard work more manageable.

- Clean up all plant debris, such as leaves, and remove dead plants. Plant debris is an excellent hiding place for rodents, roaches, insects, and other vermin. Also, removing plant debris rids your yard of potential diseases that can infect your plants next year.
- Prune your trees for shape and lift canopies on trees next to the street and in your yard. Low-hanging tree branches in your yard can shade your turf, and vehicles can hit and damage low-hanging branches on street trees. When removing branches, make a **jump cut** before making the final cut at the **branch collar**.



- Cut back perennials that have started to decline and remove spent flowers.
- Fertilize your beds if you still need to do so this fall.
- Replenish mulch in beds to add an extra layer of protection for your plants from the cold weather. Mulch holds valuable moisture to reduce winter watering and helps prevent unwanted winter weeds.

- If you have not done so this fall, add a pre-emergent over the mulch, such as Halts or Preen, for another layer of weed protection to prevent weeds.
- To protect your valuable clay or ceramic containers from freeze damage, empty them and store them in the garage. If that is impossible, turn them upside down in a protected area.
- Clean all your gardening tools.
- Put away all gardening equipment and water hoses.
- Protect outdoor faucets from freezing.
- If you did not apply a fall pre-emergent to your turf, do so now to prevent weeds from germinating. Apply Halts or Preen at label rates.
- Control any active weeds in your turf with post-emergent weed control for Southern Grasses. Again, follow all label instructions when applying.
- If you have not fertilized your turf in the last 12 weeks, do so now. Fertilizing feeds turf roots during the winter.
- Start lowering your mowing height on turf. During the winter, thick turf packs down and becomes more susceptible to diseases that will overwinter and attack new growth in the spring. Drop mowing height by one setting every month until March. And yes, if you do this, you will have only some of that debris to remove in the spring.
- Plant winter color such as pansies, violas, dianthus, snapdragons, kale, ornamental cabbage, or one of the vast varieties of Dusty Miller (photos in list order).



- Set the irrigation controller to run one time every two weeks. Turn your controller off if you have received rain during those two weeks.

□ **BE ALERT FOR EXTREME COLD WEATHER!!**

Drought-stressed plants are more susceptible to cold damage, so watering plants a few days before a cold snap is good practice. Watering just before a freeze helps by creating warmth— the wet ground remains warmer than the dry ground, which insulates the root structure of the grass and plants, decreasing the risk of freeze damage. Make sure to turn your irrigation to the off position after watering.

Once you finish these tasks, you can relax for a few months and enjoy the upcoming holiday season with your family and friends!



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