

MONTHLY HORTICULTURE NOTES

Now that garden season is well on its way, I thought it would be helpful to review garden tool care. According to my notes, from a class I took some time ago, we should be cleaning & oiling our tools after each use. And, if they have been in contact with any blighted or diseased plants, they should be disinfected as well. The easiest thing to do is to use Lysol, rubbing alcohol, or antiseptic mouthwash to clean the tool. After cleaning, applying oil is recommended to keep metal parts from rusting, to keep mechanisms moving smoothly, & to prevent wooden handles from deteriorating. Motor oil is a good choice for the metal pieces. Boiled linseed oil is best for the wooden handles. If it is a new tool, lightly sand the handle before rubbing in the oil.

Here are a few suggestions to make this care simple:

1. Make disinfectant wipes by adding Lysol, alcohol, bleach, or whatever disinfectant you want to a container of baby wipes. Make sure the label is marked to warn against use on a baby.
2. Make oil wipes by using baby wipes with about 2-3 ounces of motor oil added to the container. Again, make sure to mark the container well.
3. Make an oil/sand slurry with about a pint of oil to 20 pounds of coarse sand. Clean your tool, then insert it into the slurry a few times. Wipe off the excess sand & oil.