

8516 BANDERA ROAD  
SAN ANTONIO, TX 78250  
(210) 680-2394



[www.rainbowgardens.biz](http://www.rainbowgardens.biz)

2585 THOUSAND OAKS  
SAN ANTONIO, TX 78232  
(210) 494-6131

# Scale Prevention Using Horticultural or Dormant Oil

## Introduction to Horticultural and Dormant Oils

Horticultural or dormant oils are essential tools in pest and disease management for gardeners. These oils are particularly effective in controlling the eggs of pests, such as scale insects, which overwinter on plants. By applying these oils, you can prevent difficult pest problems before they start. Dormant oils work by coating and suffocating pests, disrupting their respiratory systems.

## Application Targets

These oils are best used on:

- Deciduous trees
- Fruit and nut trees that are currently dormant and not in bloom
- Susceptible evergreens like euonymus, photinia, bay laurels, hollies, and boxwoods

## Timing and Application Methods

Deciduous trees and shrubs:

- Applying horticultural and dormant oils during the winter when trees are leafless and dormant is ideal.
- Oil can reach the limbs directly, where scale insects reside.
- Harm to beneficial pollinators is limited as they aren't visiting trees and shrubs when not in bloom.

Evergreen trees and shrubs:

- Apply in the early morning to avoid foliage damage from intense sunlight.
- Extra care should be taken to make sure you can get through foliage to spray limbs.

#### Citrus

- Citrus are an exception and should not be sprayed during winter. Many are still in bloom in our area.
- Read labels for recommended application time for the area you reside.

#### **Important Considerations**

- Temperature is crucial: Apply oils when temperatures are between 40° and 70°F.
- Avoid application when a freeze is expected within 3-4 days.
- Typically, a single application suffices if done correctly.
- Always read and follow product labels for safe and effective use.

#### **Protecting Nearby Plants**

When spraying near annuals or other sensitive plants, protect them with a drop cloth to prevent overspray. This precaution helps safeguard your entire garden against unwanted damage.

By incorporating horticultural and dormant oils into your garden care routine, you can effectively prevent pest infestations and protect your plants from scale insects. Remember, a little preparation now can save you from dealing with significant pest damage later in the year. Happy gardening!