

August 27, 2008.

It is time now to slowly start decreasing the amount of irrigation to woody shrubs and ornamentals so they will start to slow their growth and get ready for fall and winter. The exception is fruit trees with fruit crops on them. Keep fruit producing trees well watered until harvest. Then cut the water back. The other exception is native aspen and conifer trees, that need enough water to withstand attack by insect borers.

There are few serious insect pests at this point in the summer. The one exception is poplar borer. We are seeing Poplar borer egg-laying activity (fresh sawdust and sap running) on Aspen tree trunks now. If you find sawdust on your Aspen trunks, now is the time to apply an insecticide trunk spray. The least-toxic option is Pyrethrin. The hard-pesticide options are synthetic pyrethroids such as cyfluthrin or permethrin.

There should be no need to spray fruit trees now. We are catching Codling moths in low numbers now, but not enough to consider a third Codling moth spray.

Mite and aphid populations are decreasing in our sample sites. There is no need to spray for these pests this late in the season. Mark woody shrubs and trees that have mites now and remember to treat them with a dormant oil spray next spring.

Some plum, ornamental plum, and cherry tree leaves have lacy holes from pear slug feeding. But unless populations are high (more than 50% of leaves infested), there is no need to treat this pest now.

Grasshopper populations are still high in many locations, but are slowing their feeding in most sites after the wetter, cooler weather.

In vegetable gardens, start to decrease irrigation water on tomatoes, winter squash, potatoes and onions to encourage ripening and drying for winter storage. On cool, cloudy days these crops need no irrigation at all, even if you notice a bit of late afternoon wilting.