

Oil Sprays - if used on a hot day in summer will cause burning of leaves and leaves will drop off.

White Oil Spray - A homemade white oil spray can be used to counter scale insects on the leaves and fruit of citrus trees. To make this spray blend 1 cup cooking oil with half cup water. A small amount of detergent can be added to stop separation of the emulsion. Dilute the mixture with 40 parts of water; put through blender to mix properly; and spray on trees to smother scale pests.

Margaret Sirl suggests adding one onion, 2 cloves garlic, couple chillies.

To make something a bit more powerful you can add either Malathion or Carbaryl as per the quantities on the labels – but this does not seem to be necessary and gets away from being organic.

I understand that the ‘concentrate’ can be stored and diluted as needed.

Various versions of this spray have been talked about over many years and I have made some variations for smaller quantities which are not quite as strong as set out above but seem to be quite effective – for example:

Blend 5 mls oil, 2.5 mls water; dilute with 200 mls water.

Blend 30 mls oil in 15mls water, dilute with 1200 mls water.

Blend 66mls oil in 33 mls water, dilute with 4 litres water. (This seems to be a good quantity for our 5 citrus trees.)

If you go to www.abc.net.au/gardening and search ‘oil sprays’ you will see this recipe presented lots of times. The latest version off the ABC site seems to be:

“Make the oil spray by blending two cups of vegetable oil with one cup of pure liquid soap, and mix it until it turns white. Dilute one tablespoon of the emulsion to one litre of water and spray all affected areas thoroughly. Do this during mild weather, because if it's hot it may burn the plant's leaves.”