



# ASK THE EXPERT

DR. BALAKRISHNA RAO



## More on draining wet wood

The following comments have been received from readers in response to Dr. Rao's answer concerning wet wood problems.

"As you can see from the following comments, the practice of installing drain tubes for wet wood is controversial," says Dr. Rao. "The statements are certainly valid, and—in theory, at least—drain tubes do not appear to be necessary or advisable.

"In practice, however, many arborists including myself have observed dramatic improvement in the condition of affected trees following drain tube installation, with no apparent adverse effects. Additional information and/or research is necessary to determine why some trees respond while others do not, and whether an alternative method could improve the condition of trees without the potential for causing more serious injury."

**From James Burks, arborist consultant, Missouri:** Although I enjoy and learn from reading your column, I must take issue with your advice in the May, 1992 issue.

In your answer, you recommended installing a drain tube into bacterial wet wood. While this practice was once commonly used, it has now fallen into disfavor and rightfully so.

To help relieve pressure within the tree requires precise knowledge as to location of the source of that build-up. Since we cannot see inside the tree, our "aim" is nothing more than an educated guess.

If the tube is installed "off target," it does no good. Further, drilling through the tree trunk breaks down the tree's natural defense boundary, thus allowing disease organisms a potential entry into healthy wood. In some cases (such as cabling), the negatives of breaking down CODIT walls may be justified; however, whatever benefits may occur due to the drainage tube installation (which have not been shown in the studies I am aware of) certainly do not argue for such treatment.

In my experience, most trees affected by bacterial wet wood are healthy despite the unsightly, sometimes malodorous ooze. In fact, according to Dr. Jim Feucht in Denver, some evidence supports the hypothesis that wet wood may actually lubricate tight branch crotches, thus helping prevent or minimize breakage.

My advice: do nothing.

**From Jim Boron, Colorado:** I am confused. It is my understanding that wet wood should never be treated by installing drain tubes.

I understand that wet wood is caused by bacteria that alters the wood inside the tree and in the process creates very moist conditions, high elemental concentrations, high pH and anaerobic conditions. Under these conditions, the affected wood is still relatively sound and is compartmentalized such that it does not further infect surrounding wood.

When holes are drilled and tubes installed into this zone, the infection is allowed entry into additional, unprotected portions of the tree, and is allowed access as well to the cambial region of

the hole's entry through the trunk. This cambial region is affected also, often causing cankers where there would be otherwise none.

Further, upon drying, the interior wet wood region becomes aerated, allowing decay-causing fungi to enter and begin a further deteriorating process not only in the original zone of wet wood, but along the path of hole entry. Upon decay, the interior wood is not nearly as strong as the original wet wood, and thus, the entire tree may become a hazard.

It is my understanding, then, that trees affected with wet wood should not be treated with drilled holes or with inserted drain tubes. If I should be wrong, please let me know. If the above information is found to be correct, then please let your readers know.

Improper treatment of our trees deserves no less.

## Plants for black walnuts

**Problem:** What kinds of plants can be planted or grown within the root spread of black walnut trees? (Calif.)

**Solution:** The following information comes from a University of California publication.

The following trees have been reported to grow within the root spread of black walnut trees: Virginia pine, red cedar, hickory, black birch, American beech, white oaks, red oaks, black oaks, American elm, tulip tree, papaw, sassafras, sycamore, American crabapple, hawthorne, black cherry, honey locust, Canadian redbud, black locust, tree of heaven, staghorn sumac, sugar maple, red maple, Ohio buckeye, flowering dogwood, black gun and blackhaw viburnum.

The following shrubs and woody vines have been reported to grow within the root spread of black walnut trees: hazelnut, old man's beard (*Clematis virginiana*), American barberry, spice bush, wild hydrangea, black raspberry, blackberry, wild rose, smooth sumac, dwarf sumac, poison ivy, bitter-sweet, Virginia creeper, wild grape, St. John's-wort, maple-leaved viburnum and common elder.

For additional information:

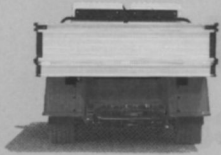
Brooks, Maurice G. 1951. *Effect of Black Walnut Trees and Their Products on Other Vegetation*. Bulletin 347, West Virginia University, Agricultural Experiment Station, Morgantown, W.Va.

Rietveld, W.J. 1983. *Allelopathic Effects of Juglone on Germination and Growth of Several Herbaceous and Woody Species*. *J. of Chemical Ecology*, 9(2): 295-308.

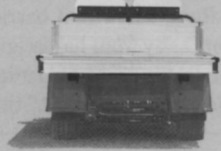
*Dr. Balakrishna Rao is Manager of Research and Technical Development for the Davey Tree Co., Kent, Ohio.*

*Mail questions to "Ask the Expert," LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT, 7500 Old Oak Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44130. Please allow two to three months for an answer to appear in the magazine.*

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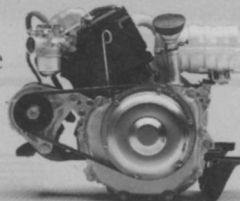
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# PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

## New control fabrics promise end to weed, root miseries of landscapes

■ Kimberly-Clark's new Checkmate landscape fabric is called a "significant breakthrough," because of its three-layer construction.

Two outer layers are tear resistant and permeable, allowing air, water and nutrients to reach plants. The middle section is made of densely-packed fibers which act as a filtering mechanism.

Laminated together, the three layers create a more effective weed barrier that encourages nutrients to reach shrubs more efficiently than in all other non-woven or polyethylene weed control products,

Kimberly-Clark says. Checkmate can also be used as an underlay for walkways, in retaining walls to promote better drainage, on slopes to help prevent soil erosion, or anywhere weeds are a problem.

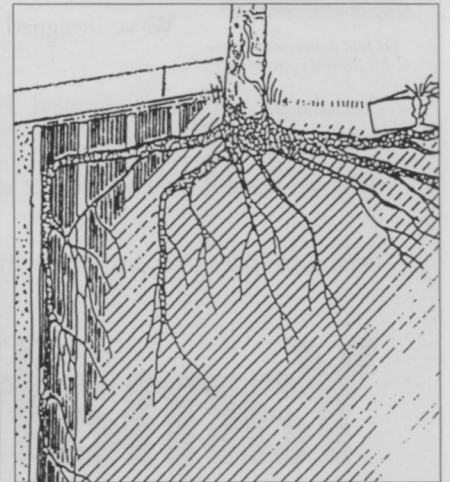
Checkmate is non-toxic, and the company says it conserves soil moisture and helps to moderate extreme temperatures.

Kimberly-Clark says the product is easy to use. It can be cut with ordinary scissors and fits over existing shrubs or in plant bed preparation. Checkmate is flexible, and conforms to any ground contours.

**Circle No. 191 on Reader Inquiry Card**

■ Vespro, Inc., of San Rafael, Calif. is the maker of Control A Root, a new root barrier that deflects tree roots away from hardscape.

Control A Root is made of extruded polyethylene and uses an "agonic curl," that



feeds and directs roots downward. According to Vespro, the curl helps to nurture and guide the roots downward. The panels are connected by slipping one panel into the channel of the other, eliminating the need for a fastening strip, and requiring less time for the landscaper.

Vespro says Control A Root will not crack after it is installed.

**Circle No. 192 on Reader Inquiry Card**



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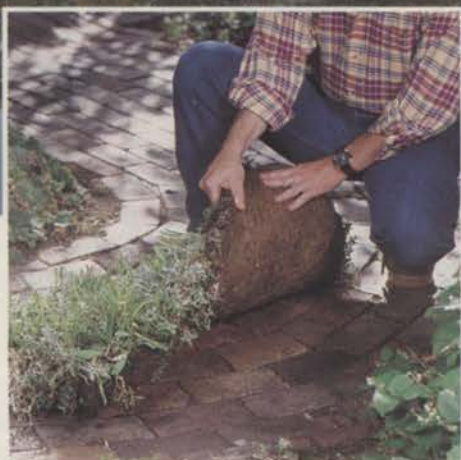
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# GREEN INDUSTRY SHOWCASE

## Fungicide label extended to ornamental disease control

Under an expanded label recently accepted by the U.S. EPA, the broad-spectrum, multi-site disease control of ISK Biotech's Daconil 2787 flowable fungicide now extends to 55 damaging diseases on 78 species of broadleaf shrubs and trees—including conifers—as well as foliage plants and flowering plants and bulbs.

For turf applications, Daconil 2787 fungicide is now labeled for control of algal scum, as well as a broader range of the fungal pathogens that cause dollar spot, brown patch, leaf spot, melting-out, brown blight and other diseases.

**Circle No. 193 on Reader Inquiry Card**

## New sweeper cleans up to 31,000 square feet per hour

Parker Sweeper is introducing the Parker 27 for quick and thorough clean-ups, indoors and outdoors.

Parker says the sweeper is ideal for



small yards, parks and parking lots.

The Parker 27 is portable, lightweight and, according to the company, sweeps five to seven times faster than manual sweeping and can clean up to 31,000 square feet per hour.

The Parker 27's broom pressure is infinitely variable, and the rotary side brush sweeps dust and dirt away from walls and corners.

The sweeper operates in forward and reverse directions, and picks up dust and small debris, such as cans, bottles, cigarettes and paper.

**Circle No. 194 on Reader Inquiry Card**

## Color guide a new way to diagnose plant health

ColorBank is a horticultural diagnostic guide that uses green color bars to help rate the health of all exterior landscape plants under company care.



The 50-page fan-shaped guide includes a list of more than 250 common landscape plants with their individual healthy color rating and the appropriate green color bars for quick comparison with your specific plants. According to Eubank Consulting, the guide lets the expert keep track of plant "greenness" from one rating period to the next.

**Circle No. 195 on Reader Inquiry Card**

## New tractor designed just for commercial service

Walker's new Model -T tractor is powered by a 20-hp Kohler Command V-Twin engine.

Designed especially for commercial ser-



vice, this model packs a powerful engine into a compact mid-size tractor to provide high productivity without sacrificing

maneuverability.

Walker says the Model-T has the same dimensions as other Walker riding mowers.

Walker is also introducing 48 - to 60-inch mowing decks for use with more powerful models, as well as an optional parking brake.

**Circle No. 196 on Reader Inquiry Card**

## Turf herbicide recently registered for use in Arizona

Monsanto Company recently announced the registration of Dimension turf herbicide by the Arizona department of Agriculture for use in the state of Arizona.

Dimension is designed for use by golf course superintendents, lawn care operators and landscapers to control crabgrass and other problem weeds.

The active ingredient, dithiopyr, is the result of new chemistry developed by Monsanto. Features include low use rates and low soil mobility.

According to the company, Dimension binds tightly to the soil and has low potential for groundwater contamination or surface run-off.

**Circle No. 197 on Reader Inquiry Card**

## New weapon in arborist arsenal against oak wilt

Alamo is a new systemic fungicide from Ciba-Geigy for control of oak wilt and Dutch elm disease.

Ciba-Geigy reports successful results after more than two years use in Texas against oak wilt, and the University of Minnesota has confirmed that Alamo is effective against both diseases in cooler climates.

The company also suggests::

- promptly remove infected trees;
- properly time tree pruning;
- dispose of firewood in affected areas.

If applied before symptoms appear, Alamo effectively prevents oak wilt and Dutch elm disease from damaging trees, and may also save some trees with as much as 30 percent crown loss.

Alamo must be injected into the tree's flare roots, just below the soil surface, with special equipment.

**Circle No. 198 on Reader Inquiry Card**



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**1. BUSINESS & INDUSTRY**

MY PRIMARY BUSINESS AT THIS LOCATION IS:  
(PLEASE MARK ONLY ONE IN EITHER A, B OR C)

**A. Landscaping/Ground Care at one of the following types of facilities:**

- 01  0005 Golf courses
- 02  0010 Sports Complexes
- 03  0015 Parks
- 04  0025 Schools, colleges, & universities
- 05  Other type of facility (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**B. Contractors/Service Companies/Consultants:**

- 06  0105 Landscape contractors (installation & maintenance)
- 07  0110 Lawn care service companies
- 08  0112 Custom chemical applicators
- 09  0135 Extension agents/consultants for horticulture
- 10  Other contractor or service (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**C. Suppliers:**

- 11  0205 Sod growers
- 12  Other supplier (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Which of the following best describes your title:  
(mark only one)

- 13  10 EXECUTIVE/ADMINISTRATOR
- 14  20 MANAGER/SUPERINTENDENT
- 15  30 GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL
- 16  40 SPECIALIST
- 17  50 OTHER TITLED AND NON-TITLED PERSONNEL (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

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102	119	136	153	170	187	204	221	238	255	272	289	306	323
103	120	137	154	171	188	205	222	239	256	273	290	307	324
104	121	138	155	172	189	206	223	240	257	274	291	308	325
105	122	139	156	173	190	207	224	241	258	275	292	309	326
106	123	140	157	174	191	208	225	242	259	276	293	310	327
107	124	141	158	175	192	209	226	243	260	277	294	311	328
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109	126	143	160	177	194	211	228	245	262	279	296	313	330
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114	131	148	165	182	199	216	233	250	267	284	301	318	335
115	132	149	166	183	200	217	234	251	268	285	302	319	336
116	133	150	167	184	201	218	235	252	269	286	303	320	337
117	134	151	168	185	202	219	236	253	270	287	304	321	338

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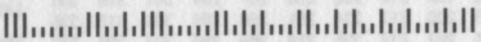


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