**Old Seeds Q’s & A’s**

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Q: Will seed that is 8 or 9 years old germinate? I have some carrots, radishes and beets that were packaged for 2004.

A: It often depends on where the seed packets were stored. I have had carrots packaged for 2007 germinate this fall. I recommend that you go ahead and plant them. To account for a reduced germination rate, plant them thicker than normal. You should know relatively quickly if they will germinate. If nothing is up in 2 weeks, replant. To hedge your bets, plant some seed of the season as well. Good luck!

Q: How long does it take for bur oaks to produce acorns? Out tree has finally started to put 2 feet per year of growth on after 10 years, but so far, no acorns.

A: Bur oaks are unpredictable acorn producers. Many trees seem to rarely produce the golf ball sized acorns, and there are others that are reliable producers. I have heard that wholesale nurserymen who produce bur oaks have identified the best producers and make a pilgrimage every year to collect the acorns.

Q: We have an open box of slow release lawn fertilizer left from this spring. Can I use it this fall instead of buying a “winterizer” fertilizer? Fertilizer is so expensive, and open bags do not store well.

A: Yes, you can use up the slow release lawn fertilizer. “Winterizer” formulations are relatively fast release, but slow release works nearly as well in the fall. The other alternative is to use your open bag of slow release fertilizer for your winter vegetable and flower gardens.

Q: I just wanted you to know that my combination of neem oil and seaweed extract has kept my tomatoes free of spider mites for two years now – both in the spring and in the fall.

A: Thanks for the information. I am also trying the combination this fall, and so far, so good.

Q: How much longer will my zinnias last?

A: Sometime until the end of November when the cool nights get to be too much for them. I pulled mine to make room for snapdragons.