

TUNE-UP TIME

Allen C. Botacchi

Cooperative Extension Horticulture Agent

No, I am not referring to your trucks or other gasoline powered equipment, although they should also be checked.

I am concerned with greenhouse heating systems. January and February are generally the coldest months of the year in this part of the country. As additional houses are filled and the heating systems are "put-on-line", these systems must operate at peak demand.

Furnaces must operate efficiently, dependably and economically in order for a grower to produce quality crops. So, either tune-up the burners yourself or hire a heating contractor to do it for you. Test kits designed to aid in adjusting burners to top efficiency cost about \$125.

Read the directions that come with the test kit, but before you tune the burner -

- (1) check the combustion chamber for cracks, weld breaks, etc.
- (2) replace any rusted stack pipe
- (3) make certain the stack damper is properly installed and working
- (4) check fresh air supply to the burner and
- (5) make certain that the outside stack pipe is at least 2 1/2 feet higher than the ridge or highest point. The taller stack will discourage down-drafts.

Checking and correcting these five points, especially the in-house furnaces, will prevent needless fume injury (sulfur dioxide and/or ethylene) to greenhouse crops.

Finally, this may be the year to consider replacing burners with more economical, higher efficiency units.