

Blackspot of Roses

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Roses are always a popular flowering plant and why not. Big gorgeous blossoms, heat tolerance and they'll bloom throughout the summer IF you can keep them healthy. One of the most common diseases of roses is a leaf disease called blackspot. As it's name implies, it creates sooty looking blotches on the leaves and if left unchecked it will totally defoliate the plant. While it won't kill a rose bush, it can weaken it to the point that other problems move in. When selecting new rose bushes to plant, always try to find those that have blackspot disease resistance. Many popular roses like the Knockout roses and others are well known for their blackspot resistance. But keep in mind that just because a rose variety is resistant to blackspot it doesn't mean it's resistant to all diseases. That's a common mistake and then homeowners have a full bed of these roses that get hammered by mildew or worse yet, rose rosette. The weather we are currently having is perfect for blackspot to get started so you need to start getting on top of it. If you have to water, don't use sprinklers. You want to keep the foliage dry. Planting in full sun and wind also help with that. Clean up all the old foliage and dead canes from past years. Then get on a spray program with one of several good fungicides, actually it'd be better to use two in rotation, treating every 10 to 14 days. There are some soil applied systemic products that can work for 4 to 6 weeks. Be sure to mix products according to label directions, apply thoroughly wetting all leaves and repeat as recommended on the label. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Ash/Lilac Borer

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. The season is running a little bit late, but we may start catching up in a hurry now. There are numerous pests that we face every year that you need to take a proactive approach because if you wait until you start to see problems, it's too late. Bagworms are the classic example of this, but don't jump the gun on them, the first treatment isn't until June. BUT if you have small ash trees or lilacs of any age, you need to get ready to treat them for ash/lilac borers. Note that this is not the same as the emerald ash borer - that's a different beast with different controls. Ash-lilac borer is a moth that lays eggs at the base of the tree or lilac stems. The caterpillar hatches out and crawls a little ways up the stem and burrows into the bark. It spends time chewing around just under the bark. This chewing action severs the tissue that moves food and water and with enough damage, the stem dies. We use a vaccination approach to dealing with this pest. We want to spray the base and lower portions of the plants with a residual insecticide so that when the egg hatches and the small caterpillar starts to chew through the bark, they eat the insecticide and then die before they can do much damage. Two products are labeled for this, either bifenthrin or permethrin. It looks like the first spray window is going to be around May 15th this year with a repeat treatment around 4 weeks later. Mix the spray according to directions and then thoroughly soak the bottom 2 to 3 feet of the ash tree or the bottom 18 to 24 inches of the lilac stems. Spray to the point of runoff treating all sides. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Tomato Time?

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Year after year after year I tell gardeners the same thing. Don't plant tomatoes until Mother's Day weekend. Well, we are past that time frame and I'm not sure that it's really warm enough yet, but go ahead and plant them anyway. When people think about temperatures for planting tomatoes they always think about the air temperature but that's only half of the equation. It's also soil temperature. And the soil has been very slow to warm up this year. Soil temperatures have been running about ten degrees below expected for this time of year. But even if the soils may still be borderline cool, they are finally warming up and should catch up soon so go ahead and get the tomatoes and peppers and eggplant planted, but I'd still hold off another week on sweet potatoes. With that said, however, we have another challenge and that's protecting those young transplants from the wind. I'm certain that we're going to jump from March weather to June or July weather and temperatures in the 80s along with typical Kansas wind can really put stress on those new transplants. Probably the best windbreak is a wooden shingle stuck into the ground on the southwest side of the transplant. Milk jugs or 2 liter soda bottles with the top and bottom cut out can also be used but you may need to stick a dowel or metal rod down inside the bottle to keep the wind from blowing it away. The other advantage to the 2 liter bottle technique is that it can provide protection from those hungry little bunny rabbits that always seem to find their way into our gardens! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.