

Tall Fescue Cultivars

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I would estimate, conservatively that there are nearly 500 tall fescue varieties currently available. Just the newest ones that are in the regional turfgrass evaluations number 113! So when it comes time in September to select a tall fescue cultivar to plant, how the heck do you decide? Well, the good news is that most of them will actually do very well. Varieties are rated on a 0 to 9 scale with 0 being dead and 9 being perfect turf. In general we say that anything that's over a 6 is worth planting. Well out of the 113 varieties in the regional test, only a dozen were under a 6.0. Interestingly, year in and year out, K-31 tall fescue, the good old standby, is included as a standard check variety and it comes in a full point below the lowest other cultivars at 4.1. So, while K-31 is often the cheapest cultivar you can find, it should only be used in large low maintenance areas away from the house. The K-State turf gurus selected 25 top notch varieties and if you want to know what they are, call me and I'll tell you. But what I'd suggest doing is getting a blend like the Gardenwise Premium fescue blend or one of the blends available from Geary Grain. These blends are put together by folks that spend hours reading these trial results. The important thing to do is to make sure that you are planting seed that is 100% tall fescue. Don't use ryegrass or red fescue or anything other than tall fescue or possibly Kentucky bluegrass in some settings. Plant 6 to 8 pounds of seed per 1,000 square feet and then make sure that it is covered by soil. Broadcasting seed won't work! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Things in Trees

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I've started noticing "things in trees" and a few people have started asking about them. A general problem that will become more obvious in coming weeks is fall webworm. This is those masses of caterpillars that envelope the ends of tree branches with webbing and then eats the leaves inside. Ignore them. Next is these clumpy green or brown things showing up in ash trees, especially white ash or seedless ash. These are simply male flowers that were infested last spring by the ash flower midge. There's a little insect inside there that you can't get any chemical in to and while it looks ugly and will stay on the tree all winter and possibly next year too, there's nothing you can do now. There is a treatment you can apply next March, ask me about it later. Next is oak trees. You may notice a bunch of dead leaf tips in some of the oak trees. Some of this is a minor disease and some of it is insect related. Not much you can do about it now, or at all, so don't worry about it. The last thing is hackberry psyllids. These little insects cause bumps on the hackberry leaves and later in September and October the bumps will yield little black fly like insects that may swarm all over your screens. The bumps are unsightly but the leaves still carry on photosynthesis. Again, nothing to do now. So here's the important message. Once we get into August and especially September, there may be a lot of things to make your tree leaves look bad. But by now, the trees have already stored up all the food reserves they need so damage isn't really happening, and treatment is often a waste of time! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Read The Label

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Do you know what really bugs me? Okay, a lot of things do, but today's topic is reading the instructions. Sure, I know, a man talking about reading the instructions. In this case, I'm talking about reading the label of the insecticide, fungicide or herbicide that you want to use in your yard or garden. I've lost track of how many times the phone call comes in from someone who has already bought a pesticide, they are holding it in their hand, and they are asking me how to use it. The instructions are on the package folks, and it doesn't matter what I may say, those label instructions are the law! But what really annoys me is when someone calls and they say their garden plants are looking well and they sprayed with Sevin. So I ask what the problem is, and they don't know. So here's the way it is supposed to work. First of all, confirm WHAT is wrong with the plant in question. I'll be right honest, for 95% of uses in the lawn and garden now days, you can pretty well toss your Sevin out the door. Once you know what the problem is, and please bring it to me before you buy anything to confirm the problem, then you can determine if you have something on hand, or you need to buy something else. Remember we have herbicides to kill weeds, insecticides to kill insects and fungicides to stop diseases. Don't just go buy something because your neighbor says it's what you need. Know the problem, know what can be done to deal with it and then once you finally get the product home, read the directions on the label and follow them....please! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.