

Ground Nesting Bees

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. There are a lot of bees and wasps in Kansas. I don't just mean total number of individuals, I mean different number of species. Many of these species, unlike things like honeybees, bumblebees, yellow jackets and paper wasps, are solitary nesters. You've got one female, a queen if you will, and she does everything. There are no worker bees, but there are males - but males are pretty worthless in the bee and wasp world, they do no work, they have no stinger and their only use is to mate with a new unmated female.

That's all I'm going to say about this. One other interesting thing about many of our native bees and wasps, they nest in the ground. What can be confusing is that while they are solitary nesters, they may live as a loose group. Only one female has it's nest chamber, but you may have 30 or 40 females nesting in the same basic location. The females are busily working away. They don't have time to dilly dally around - they come to the nest site, do their business and leave. The males, however, have one thing in mind - keep the other males away from their area so if an unmated female shows up, she's all theirs! The males will course back and forth across the ground in the general area of the females. They will chase other males out of the area and if you walk into the area they'll try to act aggressive towards you. They'll buzz around your head, they'll fly right at you and try to run you away. But they are all bluff - they have no stinger. So when you see the Cicada Killers acting aggressive, or other species, just ignore them they're harmless! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Getting Ready to Plant Grass

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. There's an old saying that has a lot of truth in it - you can plant grass seed any month of the year that has the letter R in it. Which means that July and August aren't good times to plant grass. But September is. While you can plant grass seed up to about the middle of October, I definitely encourage folks to plant grass seed for new lawns, or even just overseeding a lawn, in early September. That allows the grass to germinate quickly in warm soil and to get well established before weather cools off later in the fall. If you have not recently taken a soil test of your yard, go around to half dozen different parts of your yard (assuming it's pretty uniform) dig up a trowel full of soil from the top 3 to 4 inches, lump it all together in a bucket, stir it up well and pull out a one pint sample (a standard margarine tub is a good size sample) and bring it in to the Extension office. The two really critical things are pH and phosphorus levels. If these are too far off line, we need to get that corrected prior to seeding. The important thing to do in August is to deal with perennial weed problems and for most cases that means trying to kill bermuda grass. Bermuda grass needs to be sprayed while it is growing well with glyphosate. Then water the heck out of it and spray it again two weeks later. Tilling it up won't kill it, you need to kill it with herbicide, specifically glyphosate. The other thing to keep in mind is that grass seed must be placed in the ground. The easiest way to do that for most of us, especially when overseeding, is to use a powerseeder that can be rented from most hardware stores. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Separating Day Lillies

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Daylilies are vigorous growers and really need to be divided every three to four years to maintain that vigor. Now, if you don't think you want that vigor, keep in mind that this is what helps them to bloom prolifically through the summer. And if your's aren't blooming prolifically, and you haven't divided them for more than five years, that may very well be the reason why! Daylilies have a root system that is every bit as tough as they are. One of the most valuable tools that you can have to aid in dividing daylilies is a spading fork, and get two of them while you're at it. If it's only been a few years since you divided your daylilies, you may be able to do it in place. Simply dig down with the spading fork and start peeling off fans that you can plant elsewhere until you've reduced the size of the in-place clump. But if it's been way too long since you've divided your daylilies, dig the whole clump up and get it out on top of the ground where you can work on it. Then start inserting the spading forks back to back and start working the clump apart into manageable smaller clumps. Your goal is something the size of a head of cauliflower. An alternate method is to throw the clump on the lawn, get out the garden hose and nozzle and start washing the soil off and rolling the roots around on the lawn until you can separate it with your hands. Once the dividing is done dig holes about 24 to 30 inches apart, mix a little bone meal into the bottom of the hole, replant the divisions and water down good to settle the soil. The number of flowers will be reduced the first year only. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck

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