

## Iron Chlorosis

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. When people have an iron deficiency, we call it anemia. When plants have a shortage of iron, we call it chlorosis. When people are anemic it can be a real struggle to get their iron levels back up. Well, guess what? The same is true for plants. We see iron chlorosis every year. Some plants, like pin oaks, are very susceptible to it. Soil conditions can aggravate iron chlorosis as well. As soil pH becomes more alkaline, above 7, iron starts to get tied up in the soil. There may be plenty of iron present, it is just held by the soil in a plant unavailable form. Weather conditions can also cause temporary iron chlorosis problems. This year, the wet soils are inhibiting the ability of the roots to extract iron from the soil solution and we are seeing a lot of iron chlorosis. Chlorosis is very distinctive. Tree leaves turn yellowish and the veins stay a darker green. The problem usually shows up first on the part of the tree that has the highest amount of sunlight. The best approach is to not plant trees prone to iron chlorosis. But that's closing the barn door after the horses are out. For short term fixes you can obtain special liquid iron formulations and spray them on the trees. In severe iron chlorosis problems on larger trees will do iron solution injections. These injections can last anywhere from 3 to 20 years. For a true long term solution, we treat the soil with sulfur and iron sulfate. This lowers the soil pH and puts more iron into the root zone of the tree. The process is not necessarily complex but it takes some time. Contact the Extension Office for a copy of the bulletin on treating iron chlorosis. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420

KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

## Slime Molds

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 been getting a lot of calls the past few weeks about strange growths showing up on lawns or in landscape beds, almost overnight. In some cases, these strange appearances have been best described as a mass of yellow or white stuff that looks like dog vomit. In other cases there's all these little white to blackish globules on the blades of the grass that explode in a dust if you walk through them or mow over them. The cause of both of these sounds like something from a cheap science fiction movie. Slime mold. It's kind of a fun thing to say. Slime mold. While it may look freaky, creepy or just plain disgusting, here's the good news. It isn't a problem. It may look disgusting, but it isn't a problem. Slime molds appear out of the air and under the right circumstances, the spores land somewhere and develop rapidly. They take their nutrients right out of the air - sounds pretty incredible doesn't it? The slime molds don't damage whatever they are growing on, they are simply using it as a substrate to support them for the short time they exist in that form. They are usually gone just about as quickly as they show up. The powdery forms that are on grass can be hosed off with a garden hose, or preferably, simply ignored. The more disgusting type can be picked up, okay, use a shovel if you must, and tossed in the trash or merely out of sight. They are actually much firmer in substance than they look, in fact they feel kind of cool or weird, depending on your point of view. We are seeing more of them this year because of the rain, but don't worry, they'll be gone very soon! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

## Chiggers

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. One of the biggest nuisances with spending time in the yard and garden is chiggers. Sure, ticks freak people out and mosquitoes can be a real pain, but you can see both of these rascals. Chiggers are the invisible menace. You never see them, but you know they were there and the reminder will stick with you for 7 to 10 days.

Chiggers are tiny, generally 1/100th of an inch or smaller. The larvae, and that's the only stage that attacks us, grabs on to a hair follicle and sticks its mouthpart into our skin. They do not burrow under the skin. The larvae then inject digestive juices into your skin to liquify the skin cells so they can suck it up. These digestive juices is what we react to quite quickly and cause the red swelling and the intense itching. If left in place, the chiggers will feed for 2 to 4 days and then drop off to molt into their next life stage that fortunately has nothing to do with us. Around the yard you have two options. The first one is to use insect repellents on you. Use DEET based products on skin or clothing or you can use permethrin based products on clothing only. Both are effective and while maybe not stopping all the bites, will greatly reduce the number of bites you get. The next step is to treat grassy areas with insecticides. The best choices would be products labeled for home lawns that contain bifenthrin, cyfluthrin or Sevin. Several products are available with built in hose end sprayers for easy use. Attach to the garden hose, and spray the yard with a thorough soaking spray. Read the label for retreatment intervals. Keep pets and children off until the spray has dried. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC,

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