

After the Storm

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. It seems that we are either feast or famine when it comes to rain around here. We had nearly twice as much rain the first week of June that we had the entire MONTH of May! Unfortunately, some of that rain came with high winds and that can cause problems in the garden and in the landscape. We've dodged the hail, so far, but we've also had some heavy rains. Winds can lean garden plants over. Heavy rain not only causes temporary ponding of water in the garden but it can also compact the soil surface. The first thing to do is to recognize that often the most important thing that you can do is nothing at all. If plants are leaning from the wind, just leave them alone. If you try to straighten them up, you can break them off very easily. The rain causes the plant to take up a lot of water and that makes the plants very brittle. The plants will straighten up on their own soon enough. If rain water is standing in the garden for more than 24 hours you need to try to get it drained off. Plants can stand about 1 day of standing water than lack of oxygen starts to be a problem. Get this drained off is more important if it is hot as the shallow water can cook the plants! Once the surface of the soil dries you may want to do a light scraping of the surface with a hoe or garden rake. This will help to break up the crust on the soil surface that can block oxygen from getting to the roots. Don't do a deep or heavy hoeing as you can damage roots of the garden plants. You may also want to do some fertilizer side dressing as nitrogen can be lost quickly with saturated soils following heavy rains. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Trees, Wind, Lightning and Storms

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Trees in our state are regularly exposed to high winds. These winds do a good job of keeping weak branches pruned out of many trees. But when we have strong winds from an unusual direction, like the east winds we had following the heavy rain last week, it can create all sorts of new problems. Once the storm has passed, the natural instinct for most homeowners is to rush out and take care of any perceived problems that they see. And honestly rushing right out is the worst thing to do. First of all you need to make sure that there aren't any downed power lines or hanging branches. Hanging branches are those that have broken, but are still up in the tree. It's often best to wait about 24 hours to make sure that anything that is going to fall out of the tree readily, has time to do so without you underneath it. Clean up all the little branches first. The less debris and trip hazards there are on the ground the better off you'll be. If there is big limb damage, hire a professional. If trees are tipping over, because roots are being pulled out of the ground, it is unlikely that you can straighten them up and keep them alive. If trees are split, either from wind or from lightning, you may well just have to cut down the tree. Make sure that any pruning is done using proper pruning techniques. Topping or stubbing, where branches are cut down to just big stubs, is NOT a proper pruning technique, it makes a bad problem worse and is a death sentence to the tree. Use proper pruning and thinning cuts and then make the hard decision whether the tree is even worth keeping. Call me! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Bagworms

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I talked a little bit about bagworms last week and sort of hinted that it may be a little early yet, but after some of the bagworm activity I saw last week, let me say that it's time to get treating NOW. But still follow up with a second treatment in 14 to 21 days. Even early on, as in just a few weeks after hatching, heavy bagworm infestations can be quite apparent. The problem is that people are usually looking for the bagworm bags, as in the adult bags that they see in August. What you need to be looking for right now is evidence of damage which most often shows up as a paling of the coloration of the juniper. Instead of being a nice deep green, all of a sudden parts of the shrub are looking a light green, pale green or yellow green. If you go to the website, gardeningwithchuck.com and look for the bagworm link you can see photos that illustrate this well. Keep in mind that early in the season, these bagworms are small. Don't be looking for a bag an inch or two long, these things will be 1/4 to 3/8 inch long. They will be easily overlooked if you don't take time to really look closely and carefully. For treatment, use one of many lawn and garden insecticides labeled for bagworms. I lean towards those that come with their own hose end sprayer that save the hassle of mess of mixing. You want to use a hose end sprayer to apply a lot of material. Thoroughly spray the juniper to the point that material is dripping off. Do not try to spray, even a small shrub, with a pump up cannister type sprayer, it just won't work. You won't get adequate coverage to make sure they die! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck

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