

## Gardening With Chuck for September 29 - October 5, 2014

### Sunscald on thin barked 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 love red maples. Their brilliant red foliage in the fall is phenomenal. Unfortunately red maples don't like Kansas. As one Kansas tree expert put it, he's never seen a happy red maple in Kansas. The problem is that red maples are thin skinned, or to put it more correctly, they are thin barked. Thin barked trees lead to sunscald and bark cracks. Sunscald normally happens in the winter. It can happen to many young smooth thin barked trees especially to honey locusts, fruit trees, ashes, oaks, maples, lindens and willows. The problem will be worse on larger transplanted trees and especially if the tree is rotated 180 degrees, as often happens, during transplanting. Smaller trees are much less likely to have the problem and the problem will be worse the first year or two after transplanting. Sunscald happens when warm sunny winter days warm up the bark which causes it to start to break dormancy. Sap begins to flow and then when it gets cold again, the sap freezes, cells burst and you wind up with dead spots and cracks on the south or west side of the tree. Many trees will survive but due to the loss of bark they will be stressed in hot dry windy weather. The tree will try to heal over the injury but it will always be a weak spot and promote early decay. IF transplanting a tree in the fall, wrap the trunk with a light colored paper tree wrap from the ground up to the first branches. Apply the tree wrap in October or November and remove it in March. Failure to remove it can cause more problems for the tree. It is usually only necessary to wrap the trunk the first two seasons after planting. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the

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Start Planning Next Year's Garden NOW!

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. In production agriculture we talk about the importance of crop rotation. In crop rotation you make sure that you don't plant the same crop in the same location year after year after year. By rotating crops around we can reduce the risk, not eliminate it, but reduce the risk of insect and disease pressure and to some extent weed pressures. Tomatoes are the poster child for disease issues. If we plant tomatoes in the same location year after year after year, you will start to develop very high levels of pathogens in the soil that will overcome even genetic disease resistance. But we also need to remember that certain crops are closely related. Peppers and eggplants are first cousins to tomatoes so don't plant any of these in the same spot next year that you did this year. In fact, a four year rotation is really ideal for a garden. Try to rotate cool season and warm season crops. Cool season crops tend to have smaller, more shallow root systems. Warm season crops, like tomatoes, tend to have more extensive root systems. By rotating, it gives the deeper root systems more time to break down and moving deeper rooted crops into areas where shallow rooted crops were last year, they can often scavenge and use nutrients that escaped the shallow root zones of the cool season plants. So why am I talking about this now? One very good reason. By next spring you may forget where you planted what this year. Get out your scratch pad and sketch this year's garden before you clear it off and till it under. By marking down what was planted this year, you've completed the first step for next year! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Branches on the ground?

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. It is common for me to receive questions this time of year about branches on the ground underneath trees. There are two common causes for branches on the ground under trees this time of year. There's nothing that can be done to stop either one from happening, but how you deal with each is quite different. First of all take a look at the cut end of the branches on the ground. If it has a nice angled bite then a squirrel bit it off. Squirrels bite off branch tips in the fall to take back up into the tree to build their bulky nests. These branches are usually short and have a lot of leaves on them. The best thing to do is leave the branch tips for the squirrels to pick up because they'll just keep biting off more until they have enough to build their over wintering nests. On the other hand, if the branches are longer, especially if they are under elm trees, and look like they were very neatly chewed off by a tiny beaver, then you have a twig girdler. Twig girdler females lay eggs in slices cut into the bark of these branch tips, then go closer to the tree and almost chew the branch off. The branch starts to dry out and eventually falls to the ground. The young twig girdlers hatch and spend the winter and next spring and summer feeding in the dead branch tip. There is no chemical control that is effective for this pest. The best approach is to gather up these branch tips and put them in a burn pile or in the trash to be removed from the area. This removes the eggs from the area and provides a better opportunity to reduce the population. Ultimately neither source causes much damage. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.