

### Brace Yourself for the Insect Assault

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. We've talked about mosquitoes and we've talked about bagworms and even a few other insects, but I'm just here to tell you that there's a good chance, no guarantee, but a good chance, that we are going to see a lot of insects this year. Wet weather creates an environment whereby a higher percentage of young insects survive. So six weeks of wet weather set things up perfectly there. It can also cause an incredible explosion of some insect or insect pests that we don't normally see. I've already seen things this year I've rarely seen or never seen. All the lush growth of everything provides a lot of places for insects to hide and feed. While some insects, like box elder bugs and grasshoppers, normally decline in wet weather due to natural diseases, I've even seen one farm yard with very high levels of grasshoppers this spring. So as the number of insects increases, the number of things that live on insects will increase also. You can just expect that we will have a bumper crop of spiders as we head into September in a couple more months. When that fall insect invasion season starts, you can also expect huge numbers of crickets. We've seen roly polys and millipedes galore this year and further warm spells will drive more towards our homes as brood rearing areas dry up. A treatment around the foundation with a general purpose insecticide can help reduce the number of pests. But don't go overboard outside or inside the home. Don't treat more often than the label allows. You will see more insects inside in the coming weeks, just don't panic. Winter will be here soon! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

## Sandburs

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 two types of plants that homeowners call sandburs. The one that looks like a grass and has little multi-spined seed pods that get into your shoelaces and cuffs are the true sandbur. The other one, that has the pointed spine on a hard seed that flattens bicycle tires and gets stuck in the soles of your shoes, is puncturevine. We're dealing with sandburs today and will talk about puncturevine next week. Sandburs are an annual grass that have a growth habit very similar to crabgrass. The seed sprouts in late spring and early summer. It likes to grow where there's full sun and bare soil. It doesn't deal well with competition so keeping a stand of grass nice and healthy is a good first step. While crabgrass preventers can help reduce the amount of sandburs you are dealing with, I would also follow up with a post emerge treatment in areas where you know you've had troubles before. Fortunately we have post emerge crabgrass killers that work well, especially on young sandbur plants. Many of the products contain quinclorac and work very well on all of those summer annual grasses, including sandburs but are most effective when they are still fairly small. The other product you can use is often sold as Bermudagrass Control for Lawns and contains fenoxyprop-p-ethyl. It is going to be much more effective on larger sandburs. With both products I would apply three treatments about 3 weeks apart to take care of existing sandbur plants and then any others that may come up on into August from late germinating seeds. As always, read and follow label directions. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Flowers but no fruit

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 problems that is often called in to me at this time of year concerns garden crops that are blooming like crazy but not setting on any fruit. This most often comes from two sources, the first being tomatoes and the second being vine crops including squash, cucumbers and melons. Starting with tomatoes remember that they are generally wind pollinated. Bees can help, but aren't required. Most often the problem we have, at the start of the blooming season, is heat. If day time temperatures are over 95 degrees and especially nighttime temperatures over 75, and we've had some of that already, tomatoes will bloom, but not set. Just be patient, keep watering and fertilize lightly every three weeks and they'll start bearing soon enough! Vine crops are a different matter. All vine crops have separate male and female flowers and we depend on bees to do the pollinating. Most of the time we are fortunate that we do have plenty of bees. But what happens is that the male flowers start blooming way before the female flowers start, sometimes as much as 2 to 3 weeks before. It's easy to tell the difference. Male flowers are connected to the vine by a long slender filament. This filament can be 4 to 6 inches long in some species. The female flower is borne much closer to the vine and there is always a miniature version of the fruit between the vine and flower. If it's a cucumber vine there'll be a miniature cucumber there. With a melon, a mini-melon or a squash will have a mini squash. Once you start seeing these flowers appear, all will soon be well! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.