

### Early Season Lawn Care

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. For a lot of us, this week is just another week of work. But for some lucky folks, this is spring break week. Some folks will leave town for part or all of the week, others may take the week off or maybe just a few days. And with some of the nice weather we've been having there's a lot of folks that will want to be working in the yard. To help you with that, here's a quick run down of what to do and not to do in the yard this week. It's too early to seed or overseed. You probably need to wait until the 25<sup>th</sup> or so before you stick any seed in the ground. If you want to dethatch, or better yet, core aerate, do that before you do anything else this spring. These activities disturb the soil surface and can mess up crabgrass preventer applications. Do not go out and set your lawn mower down low and scalp off all that old brown stuff. Doing that will expose tender crowns of grass plants to weather extremes. It will also open up a lot of bare soil that can allow weeds to get started. If you have broadleaf weeds that you didn't get sprayed last year or emerged after you sprayed, treat NOW. Henbit is already blooming so some will be harder to kill than others. It is probably still a week or two too early for crabgrass preventers. Dimension and Barricade can be applied around March 30<sup>th</sup>, all other active ingredients probably need to be held off until about April 10<sup>th</sup>. Lastly, if you do intend to do some reseeding or overseeding the end of the month or early April, do NOT apply any weed killers or crabgrass preventers. Most of these products can really mess up an attempt to get grass started! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

## Asparagus

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Late March could also be called, get the asparagus bed ready for another year time. Before any more time gets away from you, get out and cut off all the old dead asparagus ferns from last year, if you haven't yet. Do not just go mow them off by the way. This leaves stubs and it scatters all the old foliage, that can harbor diseases all over the place. Cut it off at ground level and move it to the trash or into a burn pile. Assuming that the asparagus isn't yet showing itself above ground, you can control early season or overwintering weeds. A light tilling or hoeing, going no deeper than about one inch can eliminate weeds and help incorporate organic matter into the soil. Of if you don't want to do that, you can just spray over the entire bed with glyphosate, but just make sure no asparagus spears are showing. Then if you want, you can apply a preemergent herbicide, trifluralin is a common one that works well. Most of these need to be gently worked into the soil surface or activated with rainfall or irrigation. After the harvest season we also have some additional herbicide options but we'll deal with those in late May or June! The last or the next to the last thing you should do is fertilize your asparagus. Apply 2 pounds of a general garden fertilizer per 20 foot of row or roughly 60 square feet. You can use a 10-20-10 or a triple 12 or triple 13. Asparagus is a heavy feeder. If you want you can also apply a mulch layer at this time. If you want to start a new asparagus bed, now is the time to start on that. Pick up our bulletin or contact me with questions on that. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK,

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## Rhubarb

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I am a big rhubarb fan. I'll go ahead and say it, I am fanatical about rhubarb. From a nutritional point of view, it really doesn't bring much to the table. But I still love rhubarb because I grew up with it. We had a large rhubarb patch on our farm and every spring, for weeks on end, there was always rhubarb something in the kitchen. Once it's established, rhubarb plants can produce for decades with little care, but the trick is to get a good bed established. Rhubarb thrives in loamy, well drained high organic matter soils. Many of the soils in our area really have far too much clay. I recommend heavy amendments of well rotted barnyard manure - to the tune of 50 to 100 pounds per 100 square feet. I also like to locate my patch where it's going to have good drainage to help reduce the chance of drowning the plants. It also needs to be to the side of your garden or in a separate space. Being a perennial, once you get it planted and established, you'll probably never till it again. While late March and the first half of April is the time to plant rhubarb, because of the needs for major soil amendment, I would start working on my rhubarb patch area this year, for planting next spring. If you have a well drained loamy site all ready though, plant your rhubarb soon. When you plant rhubarb crowns you want to plant them in a shallow trench with the eyes or buds ½ to one inch below the surface. Plants should be 2 to 3 feet apart in the row and if you do plant more than one row, make the rows about 4 feet apart. Fill the trench in and make sure water drains away readily. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.