

## Tomato Woes

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 waiting and they started arriving last week. I'm talking about the questions on sick looking tomatoes. Tomatoes are a warm weather crop. When we had night time temperatures drop into the 40s, in fact clear down to 40, tomatoes are going to look sickly. This week is shaping up better, at least with temperatures and that will help the tomato plants. But that's only one part of the challenge that tomatoes have been facing. The other one is leaf diseases. Tomatoes are very prone to leaf diseases. Keep in mind that all of that disease resistance, like VFN, that is marked on variety tags when you buy tomatoes, are concerning soil borne diseases that cause rapid collapse and death of the plant. What I'm talking about are those spots that show up on leaves, often causing the leaf to turn yellow and die. It always starts on the bottom leaves and works it's way up the plant. These are fungal diseases like early blight or septoria leaf spot. While both are possible, septoria is by far the most common one and we can fight it all summer long. Keeping leaves dry when you water is a good management tool, but when it's raining, you have to combat the problem with fungicides. While commercial growers have a wealth of products that they can use, home gardeners have about one choice - a fungicide containing chlorothalonil. Mix according to label directions and spray tops and bottoms of leaves to provide protection. If it stays rainy, spray every 7 days, if it stops raining, that can be stretched out to every 10 days. Once you start, keep spraying! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

## Controlling Nutsedge

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. There's an old saying in the plant identification world that goes, "Sedges have edges and rushes are round. Grasses have joints where leaves are found." There are often a lot of things growing in our lawns that aren't grasses. The most common ones are called sedges. Sedges have triangular stems, can be darker green than grass, but is often pale green to yellow, and this time of year it often has an odd looking seedhead on top of the stem. Many people have heard of yellow nutsedge, but there are many other sedges out there. The real bugaboo about sedges is that they have bulblets on the root system that when the mother plant is pulled, these bulblets dislodge and start growing. You could use a glyphosate compound like Roundup, but that's going to kill grass and everything. You could use an older style product like MSMA, but it needs to be warm and sunny and it'll require multiple applications. There are newer products available but to be most effective, treatment needs to be applied within the next couple of weeks. The two products that are out there are called HiYield Nutsedge Control or the same compound is also found in a product called Sedgehammer. Due to the relatively high cost of these products you are probably better off to identify the areas where you have sedges in your yard and then treat only those areas where sedges are growing. Mix according to label directions, and use a non-ionic surfactant, often called a spreader sticker to improve performance. If you have heavy infestations you may need multiple treatments for full control. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Shrooms!

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. One thing that heavy rains in the spring or summer is guaranteed to bring, other than frogs, is mushrooms. I've already been seeing quite a few mushrooms and I've already been fielding questions on mushrooms. First of all the short answer, there's not much you can do about mushrooms other than to kick them over or mow them off. Mushrooms are the fruiting body of a fungus organism. The actual fungus organism is living underground, busily decaying organic matter, often old tree roots or a stump, but sometimes nothing more than lots and lots of grass roots. The food source may be a few inches underground or it may be a couple of feet underground. In the long run, this fungus is doing you a favor because it is breaking down the source into nutrients that will then be used by other plants. This is why you'll often find an area of darker green grass adjacent to where the mushrooms are growing. When the ground starts to warm up, and then it turns wet, the fungus organism switches into reproductive mode and the mushrooms go shooting up to the surface. Once they emerge into the above ground world and the mushroom matures, it releases tiny little dust like particles called spores. These spores are the fungus' seed. They will drift about and a few will land in a moist inviting environment, germinate and establish a new fungal organism to start the cycle over again. These organisms can grow to be quite large and live a long time. But once the food source is consumed, it usually dies and the mushrooms cease showing up! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.