

### Perennial or Annual Flowers

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Flowers are not just flowers. All flowers were not created equal and you can't have the best of both worlds. I just needed to shatter that myth up front. We live in a temperate climate with definite growing seasons. That means we have annual flowers - you have to replant them every year and they die with the frost, and there are perennial flowers - those that come back from a below ground portion of the plant every year. Perennial flowers tend to have a very set blooming period. Most of them will bloom once each year and that is it - think about spring flowering bulbs, irises, peonies. These are all good examples of perennial flowers. Annual flowers tend to have greater floriferousness meaning that once they start blooming, if cared for correctly, will bloom and bloom and bloom the rest of the summer. For flower beds and pots, we generally plant annual flowers because they will flower through the season. Perennial flowers are often used in mixed beds so that we have different things blooming at different times of the year. We'll have early bloomers, mid bloomers and late bloomers. Yes, annual flowers have the extra time and expense of buying new plants each year, getting them planted and then caring for them all season long. But the reward is fairly constant blooming. Perennials often cost a little more, and there's still work involved in cleaning off the bed each year, weeding, of course, but the advantage is once they are established you'll have them each year. We have good bulletins on both perennial and annual flowers for Kansas, stop by and pick one up! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

## Early May Gardening

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. It's finally May! Hopefully all the freezing weather is behind us. The ground is warming up and it's time to get most of the rest of the garden plants started. I say most of the rest because it's still a little early for Sweet Potatoes. These tropical vines (not at all related to Irish potatoes) need even warmer weather still, wait to plant those until the last ten days of May. But there are a lot of things that we can be planting now. We are getting towards the end of this round of planting for a few things like collards, chard and lettuce. Get those in the ground as soon as possible. Virtually all the vine crops can be planted now which includes Cantaloupe, Watermelon, cucumbers, pumpkins and squash - summer type anyway meaning yellow crookneck, zucchini, winter squash you want to wait until June. Beans, both snap and Lima can be planted now. Snap beans can also be planted in stages, like every 2 weeks through late July so that you can have a continuous supply of fresh green beans. Sweet Corn, like beans can be planted in waves through late June, but keep in mind that sweet corn is best planted in large blocks, it's not well suited to small gardens. May is also a good time to plant okra and eggplant. For all of these, you can basically plant anytime in May and even on into very early June. Hmmm, it seems like I'm missing something. Oh of course, tomatoes and peppers. Yes, you can finally get your tomatoes and peppers planted with my blessing. Remember that tomatoes especially will benefit from regular side dressing of fertilizer through the growing season. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420

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## Flowering Shrub Pruning

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. The shrubs that have been blooming so well this spring, think forsythia, lilacs and spirea, formed those flower buds last summer. The buds are formed on new woody growth that the shrub grew last year. So to have the potential for a nice floral display on these same plants next spring, we need to encourage lots of good woody growth in the early to mid summer time frame. The best way to do that is to prune these shrubs after they get through blooming. Once the last flowers have faded, it's time to get the pruners out and go to work. How much pruning depends on how old the shrub is and the condition that it's in. I always like to start by removing old dead canes. The clip off any seed pods trying to form, mainly on lilacs and then trim back the entire bush to control size and shape. Keep in mind that the shrub is going to grow new woody stems and it is on these new stems that the flower buds will form later in the summer. Any pruning you might do this fall is liable to remove those buds so you have to prune back to a size smaller than what you want the shrub to be so that by the end of the summer it is back to the size you want for winter. If you have lots of room then just cut off seed pods and prune very lightly to stimulate new growth. The simple act of a light pruning tends to encourage growth. I then like to give the shrubs a light fertilization to stimulate new growth and water it in good. Depending on the size of the shrub I like to use 1/4 to 1 cup of a general purpose fertilizer, like 12-12-12 and just sprinkle it around under the shrub and then water it in. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.