

Blooming weeds in lawns

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. No matter how much I talk about it in the fall, I still have many phone calls this time of year from homeowners upset with plants blooming in their yard that they did not plant! We have plants like henbit (purple flowers), dandelions (yellow flowers - everyone knows this one), chickweed (little white flowers) and speedwell (little bluish flowers). Some of these are winter annuals, some are perennials but a couple of things that they all have in common are that they are growing in the late autumn and they will bloom in the late winter and spring. Last fall, when they were all growing, no one was thinking about them. Simply put, they were not easily seen so out of sight, out of mind. Now they are blooming and highly visible and everyone is all cranked up to do something about them. Here's what you need to know. While you can spray them now, and make them curl up and probably get 99% control, you are still going to have them next year. Even though they will die if treated, they are already making seed. So a spring treatment makes the homeowner feel better, doesn't do much for the long term problem resolution. Additionally, given the wind and warm temperatures that we've been having, trying to treat lawn weeds in April creates a risk of herbicide drift damage to desirable plants. So pull out whatever calendar you look at regularly, and on either October 22nd or 29th, the last two Saturdays in October, write down that you will treat your lawn for weeds. You may not see them, but they will be there and they will be much easier to kill!

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Spraying Fruit 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'm still not convinced that we will have fruit this year. We are just coming up on our AVERAGE last frost date and the fruit trees are way too far ahead of normal. That's just the way it is here in Kansas. BUT none the less, if you want to keep your fruit trees healthy and keep insects out of the fruit then you will want to start on a spray program soon. We need to protect the honeybees so we normally don't start spraying until about 95% of the petals have fallen. For some of our trees, we are at that point now. Once that happens we need to apply our first fruit tree spray. I prefer to use the combination insecticide fungicide products for ease of use. These products will control MOST of the insect pests that we need to be concerned about and MOST of the leaf diseases. Exceptions in a moment. These treatments need to be a thorough coverage of the entire tree and they need to be done ever 7 to 14 days. In rainy weather, more than an inch of rain per week, spray weekly. Under less rainy conditions, every 10 days and under no rain conditions, every two weeks. Do this until we approach harvest stopping in time to meet the preharvest waiting intervals. Two things that these fruit tree sprays don't control cedar apple rust and peach tree borer. For rust you'll need to add a second fungicide now through about June 1. Peach tree borer is in most stone fruits trees. For this one you need to treat the trunk with permethrin once every 3 weeks from first of May through August. If you need more details on any of this, give me a call at the Extension Office. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Fertilizing Fruit Trees and Grape Vines

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Fruit bearing plants, whether that be fruit trees, grape vines, raspberries, blackberries, whatever, need to be periodically fertilized to help keep them productive. I know many people over the years have made use of those fertilizer tree spikes, buying the one for fruit trees or shade trees or whatever fancy label they had on them. Well, here's the big secret - while they are made of fertilizer and they do provide nutrients, you are buying a gimmick and paying too much for the nutrients you need. You don't want to over fertilize and over stimulate these plants as you can generate a lot of woody growth that will actually hurt fruit production. If you really want to tailor a specific fertility plan then you need to take a soil test so we know where we are with nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. In the absence of that information we are going to apply general fertilizers like a 10-10-10 to 13-13-13, just any one of those balanced garden fertilizers. It doesn't have to be one of those exact blends but something in that 10 to 20% range. For trees in the first 2 years, simply sprinkle ½ cup around under the tree. Trees 3 to 4 years old, apply one cup, for trees 5 to 10 years old 2 to 4 cups and trees over 10 years of age, 4 to 6 cups. Sprinkle this evenly around under the tree - just don't dump it in one place. If you find that you are getting a lot of fast growing growth you may want to back off next year, or if you find that you aren't getting much new growth at all, you may want to increase your rate. For information about soil testing, give me a call at the Extension Office. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm

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