

### Emerald Ash Borer

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. The dreaded insect pest, Emerald Ash borer is slowly moving our direction from eastern Kansas. Once it arrives, which may well be 2 to 3 years before we are aware of it, it will wipe out unprotected ash trees. This is not an insect pest that you spray the outside of the tree to protect. The only effective treatments are soil applied systemic products. You can pay a professional firm to do it, OR you can do it yourself. I will warn you that even doing it yourself, there is some expense to it! You are looking for a product that's called something like Annual Tree and Shrub insect control. You're looking for a product that is 1.47% active ingredient Imidacloprid. Most labels call for 1 ounce of concentrated product per inch of circumference. Basically if your tree is 12 inches in diameter at chest height, your tree has a circumference of about 38 inches so you'll need 38 ounces of product. In general, the generic versions of this product are going for about 50 cents an ounce. You can do the math. This product needs to be applied, preferably in the early part of March when the ground isn't frozen. Go around the tree and pour the concentrated product on the ground just a few inches out from the trunk of the tree. The tree will take up the pesticide and move it throughout the tree providing protection against Emerald Ash borers. But a treatment only lasts for basically one year so this needs to be done annually. You may not want to treat every ash tree on your property, but if you have a nice ash tree in your front yard, it may be worth protecting it, and I'd start treating this year! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm

Chuck Otte.

## Pruning 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. Mid February to late March is the time to be pruning fruit trees here in our area. Far too many people plant a fruit tree and think in the first few years of its growth that it doesn't need any pruning. Yet pruning in the first few years of growth are crucial for creating a tree with good form and preventing future issues. But for general fruit tree pruning, here's some general practices to keep in mind. Take out broken, damaged or diseased branches. Remember that all pruning needs to go back to another branch or a bud so the tree has the ability to heal over the injury. Don't do a flush cut, it leaves too big of an injury, but don't leave a stub either. If two branches form a narrow angle, prune one out. If you don't prune it out now, wind or ice will prune it out for you later and it won't be a very neat job of pruning. Take out all suckers. These are branches that usually come out of the main trunk and grow straight up. They may grow several feet in one year. You will see a lot of these the year after a heavy pruning of a neglected tree, but take these out - they waste valuable energy. If two branches cross and rub against another, take one out. If you can't decide which one, flip a coin - it often won't matter. Cut back branches that are low and interfere with mowing, harvest or pruning. Cut back branches to reduce the total size of the tree. Thin branches on the inside of the tree to allow light to penetrate and pesticidal sprays also. But remember, you generally never want to take out more than 30% or 1/3 of the entire tree. Take it easy and work on it over the years. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

## Pruning neglected apple 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've lost track of how many apple trees I've been asked to reclaim due to being overgrown. What often happens is that these are dwarf trees that got planted too deep and rooted out above the graft so they are no longer dwarf. Or they were semi-dwarf trees that just never got taken care of. So then you wind up with a massive tree that may look beautiful when it blooms, but has about a billion tiny little apples. A fruit tree has the capacity to produce a set number of pounds of fruit. It may be an 100 nice sized fruit or a thousand tiny little fruit. That's why we prune and thin. Sometimes it may not be worth trying to reclaim an apple tree. It may be too big, too overgrown or just too old to mess with. Prune up the bottom of the tree and leave it as an ornamental. Remember that we never take out more than about a third of the total growth of a tree. Start by removing dead wood, that doesn't count against the 1/3 total. Then remove suckers from the base and get the bottom of the tree raised so you can work around it. Next pick out 5 or 6 of the best branches to keep as scaffold branches and cut the rest out. By the time you've done that, you may be to your 1/3 limit and you just stop. In coming years, start to thin out the center of the tree and remove crossing branches, narrow crotch angles. You want to to reduce size of the tree very to make it easier to spray and to harvest. But again, that'll probably be in year 2 or 3 of the reclaiming process. As one person told me, you know the tree has been pruned enough when you can toss a softball through the middle of it! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck

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