

Inventory Old Garden Seed

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Before you start creating your seed order for this year, I believe that every gardener needs to inventory their leftover garden seed. In all honesty, you should probably take all of these seed packets and toss them in the trash. Just get them out of the house and don't worry about them. BUT if you can't do that, get those packets all gathered together. And if you're like me, you'll find those seed packets stashed all over the place. Once you have them all together start going through them. Every commercial seed packet has a date on it indicating what growing season they were packaged for. If the date is 2013 OR older, just toss it. It may be good, it may not. Seeds can last several years, but they have to be in sealed packages under cold conditions. How many of your packets have spent the last summer or two or five in a hot garage. 2013 or older, it becomes an automatic pitch! Remember, these are commercial varieties and are not plants on the endangered species list, it's okay to throw seed away. Next, anything that's in the carrot family, like carrots, parsnips and parsley, throw it out, period. These seeds do not store well. Take what's left and look inside every packet. If there's just a few seeds left, throw it out. If you have anything left, sit down and take a look at each packet. Was it a crop and a variety that you really liked? If it isn't, throw it out. Why on earth are you wasting space keeping seeds of something that you didn't really like. Now, if you have anything left, make a list of what and how much you have, put the packets in a re-sealable plastic bag, and then order new seed! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420

KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Cleaning up around the yard

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. With the lack of snow cover we get to look at our yards every single day. We probably still see a lot of twigs and small branches on the ground. Well, take a look up in the tree. I'll bet there's still more that will be continuing to come down with each and every windy day that comes along for the rest of winter and even into the spring. There is going to be a desire, in some homeowners anyway, to rush out there on a regular basis to clean this stuff up. Here's my recommendation - don't! Landscapes are in a very fragile state right now. Sure, we've moved back in to a more typical January weather pattern so the surface soil is frozen and firm, but warmer days will cause things to thaw and it is very wet out there right now. Lawns, flower and landscape beds, and vegetable gardens are all soggy messes right now. If you spend too much time working on that stuff you can cause yourself problems. If you want to go out on a frozen day and pick up sticks, that aren't frozen to the ground, then that's fine. A good way to stave off cabin fever and yes, it is a real affliction. But on those nice days when things are starting to thaw, tread lightly and with caution. There'll be plenty of time in March, when it will probably be a little drier when you can get the leaf rake out to start cleaning up all those small branches. Wait until the ground dries up quite a bit before you start trying to fix any lawn damage from storm clean up. And for gosh sakes, don't even think about doing anything with ground in flower and vegetable gardens until the ground dries up a LOT! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Christmas is over, what do I do with that poinsettia?

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 firm believer in supporting professional industries. Poinsettia production is one of those professional industries that I strongly believe in supporting. Which means, once the holidays are over and the poinsettia is dropping leaves and colorful bracts, take the pot gently in hand, and pitch it in the trash! Some gardeners have problems throwing out a plant that is still alive. I'm not sure why that is and it would probably be a good psychological study, but don't feel bad, even if it was a gift, about throwing out a poinsettia or any house or potted plant. Plants have life cycles just like people do. Poinsettias are a seasonal plant and you can buy another next year before Christmas. BUT, if you are a gardener or a plant person and you like the challenge of growing things, and want to try to get the poinsettia to re-bloom next year, here's the steps for the next few months. First of all get a copy of our bulletin on poinsettias. You can get it from our office or just google poinsettias Kansas State. From now until May, continue to keep the poinsettia in a cool location - above 60 but below 75 degrees, and as much sunlight as possible, but don't set them next to windows at night - it gets too cold. Continue to keep it watered but not soggy. If it dries out, it will lose leaves. About mid March the plant may well start developing side shoots below the bracts. At this time old leaves and stems above these new shoots can be removed, or if the leaves have fallen, just cut the stems back to 6 inches. Then in mid-May move it outside, keep it growing and stay tuned! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.