

Little Barley, Foxtail Barley and Foxtail

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Besides crabgrass, we have lots of other annual grasses that will show up in our yards, especially if we have thin grass, clumpy grass, bare soil, hot spots or just grass that is regularly mowed too short. Sometimes homeowners get frustrated because these grasses show up even though they applied crabgrass preventer this spring. Two of these, little barley and foxtail barley are winter annuals meaning that they start growing in the fall. The crabgrass preventers aren't going to affect them since they were actively growing when the preventer was applied. Foxtail barley has a big bushy head like a foxes tail. Little barley is short, it has pointy little seeds and right now it is turning brown and dying so those little seeds get stuck in everything. The only way to deal with little barley is to use a crabgrass preventer in the fall. Not all crabgrass preventers are labeled for this - Surflan is and Dimension sort of is as barley, hordeum species is on the label and little barley is *Hordeum pusillum*. Apply in early September and water in well. Sometimes people get confused between these two barley species and some of the foxtails that we have. Foxtails are summer annual grasses and our crabgrass preventers do work well on them. There is one species called green foxtail that is very small and some people may call little foxtail. But the foxtails are not yet putting out seedheads and won't until we are well into July, long after little barley and foxtail barley are good and dead. If you have breakthrough of foxtails you can also use the crabgrass killers with good control on small plants. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Fruit Tree Care

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Very early summer which we are now officially into, is a critical time for fruit trees, especially apples, pears and peaches. If you haven't yet thinned your fruit and have a very heavy fruit load, you need to get those fruit thinned out. Apples need to average one fruit per four inches of limb and peaches 6 to 8 inches. Remember this is an average spacing - you can have two fruit close together as long as you don't exceed that average. Keep treating for insects and diseases. Even though we may not be having a lot of disease favorable weather right now, that can change quickly and then it would be too late. In periods of little or no rain you can probably get by with spraying once every 14 days. If it starts raining more - spray every 7 to 10 days. In fruit trees that are pruned regularly, it is common to get lots of water sprouts - or new shoots that grow straight up from trunks and branches. Remove these periodically over the summer. These watersprouts simply take away energy from the tree and lead to a tangled mess that you'll have to prune out eventually. The pruning cut will ooze sap for a while but don't worry about it. The other thing you need to be doing with the weather we've had is watering those fruit trees. Fruit trees, like most trees, are shallowly rooted so they need routine watering in dry weather to insure good fruit growth. The preferred method is to use an open hose running slow under the tree for several hours. You want to apply water slowly so it all soaks in. You can also use the black drip soaker hoses if you have several trees to water at once. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Sidedressing Flowers - Keep Them Blooming

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. One of the reasons that we grow annual flowers is that they provide a steady source of color throughout the growing season, unlike most perennial flowers that will have a very specific, and often short, bloom period. One of the reasons that annual flowers keep blooming, to put it into a framework that I feel is easier to relate to, is because they know that they will die with cold weather and the only way to get their genes on to the next year is to produce seed. So to keep them producing flowers, you want to prevent them from producing seed. You also want to keep them healthy and growing well. The first thing we do on many annual flowers is a process called dead heading. As flowers finish blooming and start to fade, we clip them off or just carefully pull them off. Many of the newer hybrids and some varieties don't do a good job of producing seed, but I feel that it always makes the flower bed look better if we dead head. Then we want to fertilize about every three to four weeks and water as needed. Remember that flowers in the heat of the afternoon may look droopy even if they have good soil moisture. I like to evaluate the need to water by looking at the plants first thing in the morning and also just dig down into the soil a little bit. Watering too regularly will actually reduce root development. Fertilize with a general garden fertilizer or a high nitrogen product like nitrate of soda or ammonium sulfate at the rate of about ½ cup per 100 square feet and then wash the fertilizer off the leaves. Do all of this regularly through the summer to keep those flowers blooming! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC,

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Keeping the Garden productive in hot weather

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Yesterday we talked about keeping flower beds blooming through the summer and much of the same applies to vegetable gardens. We need to fertilize gardens about once a month and water once to twice a week, depending on weather and rainfall of course. We try to keep our garden soils moist so that plants will grow well. But moist soils, warm temperatures and soil nitrogen don't all get along well. Essentially, nitrogen is a very transient element in the soil. It quickly changes from plant usable forms of nitrogen to various forms that will escape the soil as a vapor OR be washed by excessive moisture out of the root zone. So we try to just keep trickle feeding the plants just enough nitrogen as we go through the growing season. Use a general garden fertilizer or something like a nitrate of soda or ammonium sulfate at about 2 pounds per 100 ft of row. Dribble the fertilizer down the side of the row and water in. There are exceptions to this - plants that are generally not side dressed during the growing season, assuming good levels of nutrients at the start of the season, include sweet potatoes, watermelons, carrots, beets, parsnips and lettuce. As to watering, a sprinkler is not a good way to water garden plants. You want to keep the leaves as dry as possible, especially with plants like tomatoes that are so subject to many leaf diseases. One good deep soaking per week, applied at ground level is normally enough. You can use a slow running open hose down a furrow or the black porous soaker hoses laid along side the row. Whatever you do, keep the leaves dry! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck

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Brown Patch

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. This is the time of year and the kind of weather that pretty much guarantees that we will be seeing brown patch show up in fescue lawns. Brown patch is a very common fungal disease on tall fescue lawns. The disease gets really active when you have moist conditions and night time lows above 65 degrees. What this means is that if we are having rainy warm weather, you're going to find it everywhere. But if it's hot and dry, like it has been so far this month, then the problem is going to be concentrated in lawns that are irrigated. We normally expect brown patch to be bad in July and August because that's the part of the year that we expect overnight lows to be above that 65 degrees. But with the recent heat wave we've been having these conditions earlier than usual. Brown patch usually only infects the leaves and while it may make your lawn look bad for a while, it won't kill the plants outright. Once cooler weather returns, the disease becomes less active and new uninfected leaves start to grow. While there are many fungicides labeled for brown patch control, cultural management is a far better way to go. The first thing is to only irrigate lawns in the early morning. You want to minimize the amount of time that the lawn is wet. Don't over fertilize your lawn and if you have an active brown patch infection don't fertilize at all. Concentrate that fertilization in the fall. Returning clippings to the lawn will not increase your risk of brown patch. Return the clippings to the lawn and continue to mow 3 to 3½ inches tall. Be patient and your lawn will survive! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.