

Gardening Tips for March 28 - April 3, 2016

Time to gear up for fruit tree sprays

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Whether it's early or not, fruit trees have been in bloom, are in bloom and are going to be in bloom. Whether we are going to have a fruit crop or not remains yet to be seen but we need to care for the trees whether we have a fruit crop or not. We have two concerns with fruit trees, protecting the fruit from insects and protecting the leaves from insects and diseases. There are several products available that are often listed as fruit tree or home orchard sprays. These are usually a combination of an insecticide and a fungicide and generally work really well, EXCEPT for controlling cedar apple rust. We need to spray apple trees when we first see leaves which is just about now. For this first treatment I would focus on diseases, apple scab and cedar apple rust. I would use the fungicide Immunox as it is good for both diseases. After the petals fall then you also want to start spraying with the fruit tree spray, for the insecticide AND the Immunox, at least through mid to late May. Cedar apple rust can be active with every rain until mid to late May. After that you can just use the fruit tree spray as it will control the scab quite well. Sprays should be done on a 7 to 10 schedule, maybe every 14 days if it doesn't rain. So how about those newer systemic type products that you apply at the base of the tree once and you are done with it for the year. Well, our number one apple pest is the codling moth. If you look on the label of these systemic fruit tree products, codling moth is not listed. They'll work fine for the pests listed, but not good old codling moth. Stick with the sprayer! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Next round of garden planting

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Okay, we're in the process of moving out of March and into April. Seeing April on the calendar is always exciting as that brings us our average last frost date, warming temperatures and I really hope some of those famed April showers. Soil temperatures, like daily air temperatures, are still a bit of a yo-yo, but they keep yo-yoing a little higher each round. The list of things we can be planting continues to grow. And we'll be adding even more items by the time we hit the middle of April. If you have been holding off to plant tomato or peppers for later transplanting, then you can go ahead and get them in the started in the house now. For planting in the garden, here's the list. Cabbage can still be planted up until about the 10th of April, along with brussel sprouts, broccoli and cauliflower. Actually cauliflower can be planted fairly late in April, probably clear up to the 25th. It has a bit more heat tolerance. Leafy crops like lettuce and spinach are still in the planting window but Collards and Chard should be held off until about April 10th. They like just a little bit warmer weather. Radishes, onions, turnips and beets can also be planted now. Don't waste money trying to plant garlic now - it needed to be in the ground last fall. Peas can also be planted up until about the 20th of April and potatoes can go in until about mid April. But keep in mind that we can also plant potatoes in late June or July for a fall crop. Speaking of potatoes, how are those St Patrick's Day potatoes doing? Anything out of the ground yet? And for anything else, it's too early. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Invading insects

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 received a few calls the past week or so wanting to know when those blankety blank blank ladybugs are going to quit coming in the house. Well, let's get this straightened out right now. These ladybugs, as well as box elder bugs and the tiny little gnat like hackberry psyllids have been in the house all winter long. Now, as we have rounds of warmer weather, they are coming out of hibernation and trying to get outside. Let me also add that you don't want to know how many died in the house over winter. So to begin with, put the pesticides away. They aren't really going to help. At this time of year the only place you'll probably find these critters is at the windows, down in the sinks or maybe on an enclosed sunny porch. Half jokingly, half seriously I suggest that folks just open the windows, take off the screens and let them go outside. Most people don't take too well to that idea though. So you can pick them up one at a time and flush them or take them outside. Not a very time effective manor. The second and better option is your vacuum cleaner. Keep the hose ready and when you see some of them, vacuum them up. Keep in mind that the warmer and sunnier the day the more likely you are to see them flying around. The colder grayer days they just don't get as active. So where have they been all winter? They've been in the attic, under the cabinets, hiding in drapes, sneaking around behind light and outlet plates, tucked up under furniture, on the porch, in the basement, the list can go on and on. As for what to do next year to keep them out, we'll discuss that, later! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.