

Warm Season Garden Crops

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 sure some gardeners don't understand why I make such a big deal out of not being in a hurry to get some of our warm weather loving crops in the ground. The reason was well demonstrated back at the very end of April. Many parts of Kansas, and this includes areas that didn't even get snow, had soil temperatures drop over 25 degrees in one week. Granted, it regained nearly 20 of those degrees the next week, BUT cold shock damage will have occurred by then! Even last week we had a cool day that slowed down that soil warm up. We are now in the last half of May and cold weather is becoming less cold and less likely so we can pretty well open the flood gates on almost everything else in the vegetable garden. That means from now through the end of the month, most vine crops egg plant, peppers, tomatoes can all go in the ground as can summer squash, sweet corn (which can be planted clear til the end of June and sweet potatoes. Sweet potatoes are no relation to real potatoes and as a tropical vine they really need that warm soil. They can also be planted clear though til the end of June. The one thing I don't want you to plant yet is winter squash. This includes acorn, butternut and other winter squashes that have a long shelf life. These shouldn't be planted until the month of June. Now, it's not that they are sensitive to cold weather, heck, they're no more cold sensitive than any of the others, but they simply have such a relatively short growth season that we normally want to have them ripening in the fall. Plant them too early and you're harvesting in August! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Poison Ivy

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I know I talked about poison ivy not too long ago but I've gotten quite a few questions on poison ivy in recent weeks so thought additional discussion would be in order. Poison ivy is never going to go away. It's a native plant and well adapted. Since birds are unaffected by that nasty oil they eat the seeds, readily, and then plant the seeds wherever they stop! From the minute the plant pops above ground, the sap can impact sensitive people so if you are sensitive, you need to be very careful. If the ground is moist, young plants can be easily pulled up. If you are regularly plagued by poison ivy seedlings you may want to invest in a pair of long needle nosed pliers that are only used for grabbing the base of seedlings and pulling them out of the ground. If you wear gloves when you do this, don't use them for anything else and never touch your skin! If you have a wild or natural area, like along timber or a ravine, you will probably be regularly challenged to keep poison ivy from creeping into your yard. For these areas I would actually leave a foot or two of rarely mowed grass or other vegetation so that you can periodically spray with triclopyr or poison ivy killer to stop slowly creeping vines. Remember, poison ivy killers will kill most woody plants so be very careful when and how you use it. If you have vines growing up trees I recommend cutting a section out of the vine close to the ground and treating the freshly cut stump end with concentrated glyphosate. I prefer glyphosate as it has no soil activity and won't be taken up by the roots. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Nutsedge Control

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. There is a very large group of grass like plants called sedges that will invade our lawns. Once you get your hands on a sedge plant you can tell very quickly that it isn't a grass. Sedges have three sided stems. The stems are very angular with very pronounced edges, hence the old phrase, sedges have edges. The leaves come off the plant at three distinct angles, not the two that we usually see in grasses. Another common name for sedges is nutsedge. This name comes from their growth habit of producing small tubers on the roots. These little nut like growths will lie dormant until the root system is disturbed, as in if you try to pull it up. When the root system is disturbed, these little tubers break dormancy and establish a new plant, often giving you two or three sedge plants where there was just one. You can control sedges through constant pulling, but be prepared for a multi year project. There are some herbicides that do an effective job of killing the plant and the tubers. There are several products and active ingredients on the market that are designed for sedge control. There are a few things you need to be kept in mind regardless which one you use. You need to spray at the 3 to 8 leaf stage for optimal control. In general, for our part of Kansas, anytime in late May up until about the start of summer, June 21st, would be the recommended treatment time. Spraying later than that may stimulate tubers to start growing instead of controlling them. Read and follow all label directions. Some products are pre-mixed, ready to use which is good for spot treatment.

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Anthracnose

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. If you have trees in your yard, and this will be almost any trees other than oaks or other nut trees, you may start to notice leaves falling off now and over the next several weeks! I was out birding last week and saw a sycamore tree that I'm glad wasn't in anyone's yard as I know I'd be getting an anxious phone call. This tree looked like it had been hit with a blowtorch. There are several different leaf diseases of trees that are going to be plentiful in years when we have a lot of rainfall as the new leaves are emerging from the bud. In the case of the sycamore, the disease is anthracnose. Anthracnose can be found on sycamores, maples, ash and rarely on oaks. It kills the leaves, in sycamores it also kills the branch tips, which is why sycamore branches often have a rather interesting zig-zag look to them. Other spring leaf diseases of trees include rust on ashes - which results in oddly deformed leaves, black spot and leaf curl on elms, as well as various other leaf spots on maples. Here's the important thing to remember. While the defoliation may look bad, real bad, you don't need to do anything. Do not waste money on sprays don't let a fast talking door to door salesman tell you your tree is going to die if they don't spray it for you. New leaves will come out soon and by the 4th of July, you won't know the difference. IF it turns off dry during June, and you have a small tree, then watering the tree will help. But just brace yourself and know that you may have leaves falling off your tree in the weeks ahead, it may look bad, but this is another classic case where things are not as bad as they look! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Prune Spring Flowering Shrubs

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Did you have shrubs that bloomed this spring?

Think of things like lilac, forsythia, spirea, flowering quince and these are just the most common ones. But anything that blooms in the first month or two of spring counts for this. All of these species were blooming on buds that were developed by the plant late last summer on new wood that the plants produced during the summer. Key hint here - to keep these plants blooming you need to keep these plants producing new growth each year. One of the best ways to do this, especially for mature shrubs, is to prune them after they get through blooming each spring.

Additionally, at least with lilacs, you want to get all those developing seed pods removed so the plant puts its energy into new growth development rather than seed development. I encourage homeowners to prune shrubs back to smaller than they think they want them as the plants will grow and come back to size. If you have shrubs that are really overgrown you can really cut them back, and then cut out old dead canes, especially in lilacs, to try to rejuvenate them. A word of warning on that, you may not get any blooms for a couple of years. Once you get the shrubs pruned back sprinkle a cup or two of a general garden fertilizer, like 12-12-12 or similar around under the plant and water it in if it doesn't rain in a few days. This will help kickstart regrowth.

If we hit a dry spell this summer put a slow running garden hose under the plant every other week, especially in July and early August as this is when the plants are busy making the new flower buds! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.