

Gardening with Chuck for August 27 - September 2, 2018

Late Season Yard and Garden Pests

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Oh what a difference some rain makes! One thing that isn't letting up any is insect pests. Today is just going to be a hodge podge list of pests that gardeners have been calling me about of late. Spider mites are still being an issue. The rain and wind probably impacted them more than any others. Tomato leaves developing stippled yellow appearance with a fuzzy look on the underside of the leaf is a common indicator of spider mites. Treatments are limited to horticultural oils and malathion and these HAVE to be directed to the undersides of the leaves. Sometimes a strong spray from a water hose will do about as much good. Blister beetles have been popping up on tomatoes. They may be gray, black, brown or striped. They devour the leaves. These are easily treated with about any garden insecticide but be careful not to pinch the beetles and get their body fluids on your skin as it will cause blisters! Lots and lots of little grasshoppers showing up. Keep areas around gardens mowed down and treat them in that border area. It's easier to control them before they get into the garden. With the dry summer we had grasshopper numbers have really increased which is pretty typical in drought conditions. What this means is that you can expect MORE blister beetles next year. More grasshoppers mean more grasshopper eggs laid in the ground. Grasshopper eggs are the food of immature blister beetles. More grasshoppers, more eggs, more blister beetles. Yes, you're welcome! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Start Planning for Garlic Planting Now

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 an exciting time of year in my world. I ordered my seed garlic bulbs the other day. They'll be shipped the end of September and I'll plant them about the 3rd week of October. If you want to plant some garlic then you need to start planning now. Get your seed ordered. How much seed you need depends on how big of a space you intend to plant. Last year I planted 4 pounds of bulbs in under 200 feet. I will tell you that most people probably don't need to plant more than a couple of pounds so you don't need a lot of room. Plant them in rows about 12 to 15 inches apart so you have some shading of the soil. Garlic, like onions, don't have a lot of leaves to shade the ground. As soon as the ground dries out a bit, isn't that a nice thing to say, I'll do my first tillage in getting the planting bed ready. I will likely till it a second time a few days before I plant. The ground has gotten hard the past year so I really want to try to get it busted up and tilled fairly deep. If you have some organic matter to work into the soil, that'd be a good idea. You want to fertilize it well before or just after planting. Figure on about 1 pound of nitrogen and phosphorus per 500 square feet of garlic bed. Where you get your planting stock is important also. Don't just buy some garlic at the grocery store. That garlic likely came from Mexico or China and may not be well adapted. There are several good sources for named varieties. If you need some suggestions on sources, give me a call and I can help! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Stored Energy Hazards

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I was mowing out at the farm several days ago. The wind had blown down a limb out of a hackberry tree that was still partially attached to the tree. Of course it was lying right where I needed to mow. So I grabbed my hand saw and started trimming off the ends of the branches. I was in a bit of a hurry because I had a lot to mow thanks to the rain. Now freeze everything right there. Nature has it's own rules and one of those is that the laws of nature, things like gravity, can not be stopped or ignored. Physics, gravity, vector forces, all those things that many of us tried to ignore in high school or college are very real and we HAVE to respect them or pay the price. Okay, unfreeze and continue on. I was cutting off the branches and tossing them out of the way. I started cutting off the last branch and didn't think about gravity and stored energy. When the branch broke, gravity pull it down until the branch ends offered enough resistance to block the pull of gravity. Oh, gravity was still working on it, but a balance had been reached. As I finished cutting off the last branch end, I broke the balance, and all that stored energy from gravity pulling down the end of the branch was released and the remainder of the branch continued it's path. Said path brought the branch into rather abrupt contact with my arm giving me some pretty good scrapes and bruises. Moral of the story - I'm okay but I neglected to take into account the laws of nature. Think when you're working in the yard! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Iron Chlorosis

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. There are more similarities between people and plants than we sometimes want to admit. When people become short of iron, it's called anemia. When plants are short of iron it's called chlorosis. Neither one is easy to treat and correct. Certain plants are more sensitive to chlorosis than others - pin oaks being the classic but sweet gums, maples and others can have problems as well. Frequently the problem around here isn't that we don't have iron in the soil, it's just that we can have high pH, or alkaline soils, and high pH ties up iron in the soil so it isn't available to plants. For a very short term fix you can spray iron solutions on the leaves. The leaves take up the iron solution and turn dark green. But new leaves that come out after the treatment are yellow. We can sometimes do iron injections on larger trees. Literally an IV is hooked up to the base of the tree and several gallons of an iron solution is put into the tree. It can last for several years. The best and most long term solution are soil treatments. You want to acidify small areas of the soil so that the iron will become available to the plant. Mix equal parts of granular iron sulfate and elemental sulfur. Under the dripline of the tree make a grid with holes every 18 to 24 inches. Make the holes 1 to 2 inches in diameter and 12 to 18 inches deep. Fill the hole to within 4 inches of the soil surface with the sulfur and iron sulfate mixture, fill in the rest of the hole with soil, and water it down good. Lots of labor but it works! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

It's Been A Hard Summer For Lawns

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. All it takes is a couple of weeks of rainy weather and we quickly start to forget how nasty the past 10 or 11 months have been. It was a tough winter for plants and lawns and an equally hard summer for lawns. Yes, August started to improve but a lot of lawns have paid the price for the heat and drought unless you paid the price for lots of irrigation! A lot of lawns are going to need a little TLC this fall. For starters, walk your lawn. If you are seeing a lot of open patches between the grass plants, you are probably going to need to overseed to thicken it back up. You can hire folks to do this or rent a power seeder from the hardware store and do it yourself. This works pretty darn slick - use 3 to 4 pounds of fescue seed per 1,000 square feet. If you are seeing few real grass plants and mainly undesirable plants and weeds, then up that seeding rate to 5 to 7 pounds per 1,000 sq feet. Regardless of if you are overseeding or not a good shot of fertilizer in early September will be extremely helpful. Use one pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet. Most standard lawn fertilizers use this application rate when they tell you where to set your fertilizer spreader. Even though you may have weeds coming on strong in your yard right now, don't treat for them if you are reseeding as you can hurt new grass seed germination. Hold off on the weed and feed type products until mid to late October. I can guarantee that fall weeds will be coming soon, but it's just too early to treat yet! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.