

### Poisonous House Plants

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I periodically get a call, perhaps from a new resident that's just moved to Kansas or maybe a new parent with their first child who is just starting to walk. The question always is something to the effect of, what plants are poisonous to me, my child, my pet, whatever. I'm often prone to saying - well, just about everything. Now that's not to say that everything in our landscape our out in the natural ecosystems is going to kill you if you eat it. There's certainly plenty of plants that aren't poisonous and some of the plants are downright tasty. But the problem is that something may be poisonous at the right or wrong time, and then be perfectly safe at another time. OR, someone, 75 years ago ate something and they think it made them sick, so it's now down in the annals of history as that plant is poisonous. Or if you eat one of something you're okay, but if you eat a whole bunch, you're in trouble. Yes, I can provide you a list of landscape plants, flowers and native plants that are or may be poisonous. I won't guarantee it is all inclusive and some things on the list may not be. So here comes the big R word - responsibility, or perhaps common sense. If you don't know what something is, don't put it in your mouth. As a parent, you can't be watching your toddler every single second, but you've got to make sure that they are being monitored. Kids put things in their mouth so just be on alert outside. If you want the list, ask me, but allow me a few minutes to discuss it! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

What's flying around my house

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. It's been cold outside, to some extent abnormally cold, or maybe just normally cold but we aren't used to it being spoiled by recent winters. But why are there things flying around my house? Well, on warm days in the winter, box elder bugs and the multi-colored lady beetles will both get active and start flying around the house. But other times of the winter we are likely seeing small flies or gnats. There are generally three principle sources of infestation. Fruit flies are going to show up, and don't ask me how, but when you have over ripe or spoiling fruits and vegetables. Find the source of the infestation and toss it in the trash and get it out of the house. If you see small flying things hanging around potted plants you may have fungus gnats. These almost look mosquito like, but they aren't feeding on you, but the larvae or maggots are feeding on your plants roots. Look for a biological control called gnatrol. What I find most common, though are drain flies. These small gnat like flies live and reproduce in the gunk inside your household drains. A quick solution is to first carefully dump a pot of boiling water down each drain. This quick high heat usually kills all the little larvae in the drain. Then clean out all your drains with drain cleaner. The adults should disappear in a few days. If they don't consider placing no-pest strip in the garage or in rooms that people occupy less than four hours a day. Flyswatters and aerosol flying insect killers will work as well! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

## Plants recommended for Kansas

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. We're getting dangerously close to that time of year when plants will start showing up at the big box stores. Spring fever will be rampant and people will see something and will impulse buy - which isn't always a good thing. People are always calling me up and asking me what they should plant. Please don't do that. Because then if you don't like it, it's my fault. What I'd rather you do is bring me a list of things you are thinking about planting and I can tell you whether they are well adapted for where you want to put them or if they have potential issues that you need to know about first. I am for more likely to tell you NOT to plant something than I am to tell you TO plant something. But sometimes you just need some ideas. I understand that. Fortunately K-State horticulture and natural resources folks have put together a series of web pages and bulletins to help provide you with more information on plants adapted to Kansas even specific areas of Kansas. Some of the web pages are filled with lots of photos. Some of the web pages have lots of details but no photos. The web addresses are far too long to list here but send me an email or drop by the office and I'll be more than happy to email them or provide you with a sheet with the information on it. But remember, too many people buy the plant and then try to figure out where they can put it. Which is backwards. Figure out where you need a plant and what the area is like, then find a plant to fit that spot! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Tomatoes don't all grow the same

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. For many gardeners, tomatoes are just tomatoes.

You plant them, they grow and you get tomatoes off of them. But there are three distinctively different types of growth habits for tomatoes: there are determinate, semi-determinate and indeterminate. Which one you buy is based on what your specific needs are. The classic tomato is an indeterminate type - it grows and grows and grows and somewhere along the line it starts blooming and then setting fruit. They are called tomato vines, especially by older timers, because the plants just keep growing and can reach 6 feet tall or taller. Determinate are really designed for commercial production so that a whole lot of fruit is ready at the same time so it can be mechanically harvested. Determinant tomatoes grow to a certain height, stop plant growth, bloom and set on a lot of fruit. If you like to can or make salsa or just anything where you want a lot of tomatoes ripe at the same time, then you want a determinate type. Semi-determinate are sort of in between. They are more compact than indeterminate, but capable of blooming and bearing through the summer. With determinant varieties, generally once they put on their big crop, they are pretty well done for the summer. If you want a steady supply of slicers then plant some indeterminates like Jet Star, Big Boy or virtually all of the heirloom types. If you want to make salsa or tomato sauce or a lot to sell or to flood your neighbors with, then go determinant. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

What kind of tomato do you want, Part II?

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Last week we talked about tomato production traits with information from Missouri Master Gardeners. The information last week were three years averages. But since we all know that every year is different, let's look now at just some 2017 data while we're waiting for all of it to get analyzed, but some of this is rather interesting. Celebrity and Jet Star are a couple of long standing varieties that serve as a check that we compare everything else to. In the three year Missouri Trials Jet Star averaged 30 fruits per plant with an average size of 5.8 ounces per fruit. Celebrity had 26 fruits per plant with an average of 5.6 ounces per fruit. In our trials in 2017 Jet Star produced 89 fruit per plant, nearly triple the number and the average size was slightly smaller, 4.2 ounces vs 5.8. Celebrity produced 114 fruits per plant with average size of 4.4 ounces per fruit. Total production on Celebrity was 31 pounds per plant and for Jet Star it was 23 pounds per plant. So as you hear some of those totals you may be thinking to yourself, that's a lot of tomatoes or a lot of pounds of tomatoes from one plant. How do they do it? Well, for one thing these are staked up with good room for air movement around them. They don't plant them too early, they wait for the ground to warm up. Then they water them regularly, and they fertilize regularly. Tomatoes are heavy feeders and really need a constant supply of nitrogen and phosphorus - not a big batch at once, but regular feedings! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.