

Bagworms

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Yup, we are still talking about bagworms because I'm still getting lots of calls about bagworms. They are everywhere. In cases of heavy infestations they are climbing up objects to get elevation, then they drop down on a fine silken thread which the wind will catch and carry them sometimes hundreds of yards from where they were. I can't even begin to tell you how many trees and shrubs I have seen them on or people have reported to me that they are on. You can drive down the highway at 65 and start to pick out cedar trees that are heavily infested. They are everywhere. Don't look for the big end of season bags that are nearly two inches long. These rascals are still less than a half inch long. Get close and look. If you see holes developing on tree or shrub leaves immediately suspect bagworms and start looking for the little bags, usually hanging down from the bottom of the leaf. Use most any lawn and garden insecticide but you have to use a hose end sprayer or big commercial or ag sprayers that allow you to apply a thorough soaking spray to the point of dripping off the foliage. Then spray the infested plants thoroughly. I sprayed two weeks ago with spinosad and seemed to have a very good kill. I'll be spraying again this week to get any I missed. I've also purchased a new hose end sprayer that will allow me to get higher up in some of the trees. I would spray them anywhere you find them as those in deciduous trees, while not damaging, will serve as a reservoir. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Apple Scab

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. We have two diseases of apple tree leaves around here - rust and scab. Rust is an early season problem that comes from the orange jellyfish looking things on cedar trees and causes yellow spots on susceptible apple leaves. Severe infestations will knock the leaves off the trees. This is only an early season problem and is over for this year. The other disease, apple scab, can occur over and over and over all through the summer. Apple scab looks like olive green or blackish splotches on upper and lower leaf surfaces and with severe infections can even produce scabby lesions on the fruit. Infection with apple scab can go on all summer long. While neither disease will outright kill a tree, they can weaken trees over time and also decrease fruit production, fruit size and fruit quality. Planting resistant cultivars is the best approach but sometimes you move in to a house with apple trees so you don't have a choice. If you have an apple or a flowering crab that always seems to be losing most of its leaves as you go through the summer, then it has apple scab. You can spray for apple scab anytime during the year to protect the newly emerging and unaffected leaves. We would normally recommend starting to spray after petal drop but start any time! Scab is controlled by many common fungicides labeled for fruit trees including captan, chlorothalonil, myclobutanil even wettable sulfur. Mix according to label directions and apply a thorough soaking spray about every 10 to 14 days through the summer. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Spider Mites

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 an insect pest of many plants, both vegetable and ornamental that really isn't an insect at all. It's a mite, spider mites to be precise. Spider mites are tiny. You will often see evidence of their damage long before you ever see the mite itself. They have 8 legs, as do all mites, and if there are heavy infestations they will create webbing. They prefer to feed on the under side of the leaves. They have piercing sucking mouthparts which they use to extract sap from plants and in the process they inject toxins into the plant that cause tissue death. Heavily infested leaves will often turn a yellowish bronzey color and often have tiny little yellow dots causing a stippled appearance. In normal summer weather natural predators and thunderstorms with wind and rain all tend to keep mite populations in check. But when it is hot and dry they can explode. They have exploded this year. I saw junipers with more spider mites than I have ever seen and I've continued to see them on many plants. Most insecticides simply aren't effective. Good old malathion may be the best we have going right now. Neem oil may be even better than that. You need to spray about every few days as they have a quick life cycle. You also need to spray up UNDER leaves because that's where they are. In fact, sometimes just a daily washing of the undersides of the leaves with a strong jet of water may be the best way to keep populations knocked down. But never ever spray them with Sevin! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Tomato Leaf Curl

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 a lot of things that will cause leaves of tomato plants to curl. One very common problem is vapor drift of common lawn herbicides.

Tomatoes are very sensitive to 2,4-D and dicamba which are found in just about every single dandelion killer out there. Spraying these when the temperature is above 80 will guarantee that the herbicide will volatilize and the vapors will curl leaves of plants in your own yard or anywhere downwind from you. When herbicides are the culprit of leaf curl the leaves will curl down, often feel thick and leathery, may be darker green with exaggerated veins and the leaves are often distorted especially on the edges of the leaves. The leaves will look like this all the time. All you can do after this appears is to keep the plant watered and fertilized and hope it grows out of it. There is another leaf curl that looks very different. Physiological leaf curl occurs about now when we have hot weather. The leaf curls UP, not down and it is often along the main vein going down the center of the leaf. This curl will be most noticeable in the heat of the afternoon and often, but not always, goes away overnight. Leaf rolling by plants is a common response to heat and or drought and is a way that the plant reduces water use. Rapid growth early in the season creates an imbalance between the roots and tops. Even hoeing the plants or a hard rain can cause leaf roll. Leaf roll is no big deal and the plants will usually straighten out soon.

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Squash Bugs

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 summer squash, and regardless if you have seen any squash bugs yet, you need to be spraying for squash bugs. For starters, picking eggs off leaves may make you feel good, but it won't save your zucchini. Secondly, there are no effective organic or biological controls. For home owner available products you are looking at Sevin or one of the synthetic pyrethroids. Commercial growers have a few more controls available but homeowner packaged products are limited. I would not use sevin for squash bugs not because it won't control them, but because excessive use of sevin can build up spider mites and we are in a weather pattern that favors spider mite development. I have found two products that should be readily available. Both are synthetic pyrethroids and would be my recommended sprays. If you want to use sevin in rotation with one of these then that's fine but only use it once every three treatments. Fertlome Broad Spectrum insecticide contains bifenthrin. It does have a 3 day waiting period from treatment to harvest. Hi-Yield Lawn, Garden, Pet and Livestock Control insecticide contains permethrin and has a zero day waiting period. Spray thoroughly, spray up under the leaves where squash bugs feed and spray very early in the morning before bees get busy. Another trick is to toss old wooden shingles around on the ground which may invite squash bugs to hide under them in the heat of the day. Flip them over and spray. Apply with a thorough spray. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.