

### Shade - The Enemy of Lawns

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 homeowners there is a contrasting expectation of the home yard. It is this contrasting expectations that leads to frustration on what or how to achieve it. Many homeowners want a nice thick plush dark green lawn. Very understandable. But they also want some nice shade trees providing relief from the summer sun and some nice shade for the patio or deck. And here is where the conflict starts to develop. Trees provide shade. By definition, shade is something that comes between the sun and whatever is in the shadow. Grass is a plant of the sunlight. If you've ever taken a walk through the forest you probably remember that there isn't much grass in the forest. There isn't much grass because there isn't much sunlight on the ground during the summer. I look at a lot of lawns that are kind of thin, often with bare soil in between clumps of grass. These lawns frequently also have a lot of shade. If you keep replanting a lawn, and the grass comes up good, but as you go through the summer it becomes thinner and thinner, the issue probably isn't fertility, it's lack of sunlight. Essentially you need about six hours of direct sunlight daily to grow acceptable grass. So then you have to make a choice, shade from trees or lawn. You can have the trees pruned up to try to get more sunlight, you can completely remove the trees, you can plant groundcovers like ivy or you can change your expectations. But you aren't going to change the fact that grass needs sunlight! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Time to Head into the Stretch with spring gardening

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 been talking for the last six weeks about season compression and now it is hitting us hot and heavy. We've gone from too cold to plant almost anything to being warm enough to plant everything - accept sweet potatoes and winter squash. You need to wait a little bit longer on those. The oh so crucial soil temperatures are working up nicely and appear to be well seated above 60 degrees. Soil temperatures fluctuate through the day so we don't want to just look at the maximum soil temperature but the minimum over a several day period. 60 degrees is an important soil temperature for things like tomatoes, eggplant and peppers. And at this rate we're going to be punching over 70 any day now which is the threshold for Sweet Potatoes. With that in mind that really opens the door. Maybe we should talk about what not to plant right now and that's going to be everything that we would normally plant in March - crops like cabbage, potatoes, peas. These are crops that don't do well with high temperatures like we're seeing forecast right now. But for crops like beans, cucumbers, the aforementioned tomatoes, peppers and eggplant, melons, okra, pumpkins, sweet corn, summer squash - as in zucchini or yellow crookneck and yes, even sweet potatoes in a few more days. It's time we can be planting all of this. BUT, keep in mind that weeds will be coming on strong AND with warm temperatures comes much more rapid water use so mind the soil moisture conditions closely! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

## How to kill a lawn

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I see a lot of homeowners who are out there doing their best to kill their lawn. The quickest way to mess up a lawn is to mow it short. Yeah, I harp on it all the time and I'm convinced that there are some homeowners bound and determined to prove me long, but it hasn't happened yet! Now, short, when it comes to lawn grasses, is a relative term. For fescue lawns, short is less than 3 inches tall. For bluegrass it's less than 2½ inches tall. For buffalograss, bermuda or zoysia it is shorter than that. But most homeowners have tall fescue or bluegrass. They seem to think that if they mow it short they won't have to mow as often. These homeowners hate mowing by the way. So they let the lawn get too darn tall and then go out and set the mower far too low, look for the dust cloud, and they whack it down. What this does is confuse the grass. The grass is growing tall, it's creating long leaf blades which makes food for the plant. Then you come in and remove most of the factory so the grass plant has to use food reserves from the root system to regrow. It's just about getting root reserves rebuilt and then you come back and do it again. The plant eventually runs out of energy and dies. But even before then you are creating large bare spots where weeds can start to take hold and grow. You curse the dirt, you curse the weeds and yet you've created your own problems. Instead of setting the mower as low as it will go, try setting it as high as it will go. The grass will thank you for it! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

## Black spot of roses

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. There have been a lot of people plant a lot of certain types of roses over the past few years as these roses have been advertised as being, "disease" resistant. Unfortunately, most of the time this disease resistance is only talking about black spot of roses, probably the most common leaf spot disease of roses. They are still susceptible to things like powdery mildew. But this hasn't been a powdery mildew kind of year, and it also hasn't been a black leaf spot kind of year. But with the dryness we've been having a lot of homeowners are going to start watering roses and landscaping and lawns. And if that watering is done with a sprinkler then rose leaves will get wet and many rose cultivars and hybrids are very susceptible to black leaf spot. The first step in dealing with black leaf spot is to keep the leaves dry. Water roses at the base with an open hose or drip hose, anything but a sprinkler. Lots of sun and wind is helpful to help keep rose leaves dry. Excessive rainfall this spring has not been an issue but even leaves wet with dew can be enough to get a problem started and keep a problem going. If you've had issues with black spot on roses then fungicides will need to be used as well as regular sanitation to remove infected leaves that have fallen. Tebuconazole, myclobutanil, and chlorothalonil are all commonly used and quite effective. Spray tops and bottoms of leaf surfaces thoroughly and apply every 10 to 14 days to keep leaves healthy. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

## 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. If you have fruit trees and you want to make sure you don't have bugs in them, then you need to start spraying just as soon as all the petals have fallen off the trees. As dry as it's been you probably only need to spray about every 14 days. But if we start having heavier rains, more than one inch per rainfall event, you will need to step that up to every 7 to 10 days. For apple trees you are concerned about codling moth, apple scab and for another month cedar apple rust. If you've never had problems with leaf diseases on your apple tree then your tree may very well be immune to them and all you need to worry about is codling moth. Red Delicious is a variety that has good disease resistance. If you have had troubles with leaf defoliation then apply Immunox, making sure it's labeled for fruit trees every 7 to 10 days through early June. At that time you can switch to a fruit tree spray that has a combo insecticide and fungicide. Captan is very effective against scab but not rust which is why you need to use immunox during May. Once you get into June and for the rest of the summer and for other fruit species you can rely on the combo fruit tree sprays or mix your own with immunox and malathion or pyrethrin. Be sure to read and follow label directions. Treat every 10 to 14 days and be sure to apply a good thorough spray to cover the fruit and the foliage. These products HAVE to be on the leaf and the fruit to provide protection - any gap will lead to problems. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.