

Truly the End of the Season

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. We were due for a hard season ending freeze. We were past due in fact so when it snowed last Thursday then cleared off on Friday and those north winds picked up it went past a season ending freeze to a HARD freeze! So what does this mean to the homeowner and gardener? This weather has really cooled down the soil so those who want to do some dormant seeding can certainly do so safely now - just remember that dormant seeding will generally only work if the seed is placed IN the ground. Later on in winter I'll discuss another concept known as snow seeding, but it's too early for that! If you had not sprayed weeds and they were still covered with snow when the Friday night chill hit then if we get temperatures back up over 50 sometime soon then you can still spray weeds in your yard. I'd encourage you to use liquid herbicides from here on out and not the granular formulations. Once things dry off a little check under trees to see if leaves have been terribly matted down by the moisture. If so you will want to rake up those wet yucky matted down leaves and get them off the grass so it doesn't get smothered. This cold weather is good at nudging your roses and strawberries and others into good hard dormancy. I'd still wait a few more weeks before mulching strawberries and covering roses. Root crops still in the garden can stay there for several more weeks - consider it a cheap storage alternative. But the season is winding down fast but just in time! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Knotweed Control

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I spend time every fall talking about spraying those winter annual weeds like henbit and chickweed that bloom so nice and early. These fall contact herbicides are killing plants that germinated and started growing in the fall and then bloom and grow like crazy in late winter and early spring. But there are a few weeds that won't germinate until late winter but can fall into a timing hole of not growing so fall herbicides take care of them but are up and growing early so that crabgrass preventers are way too late. One of those is knotweed. Many of you know this weed from those hard compacted sunny spots often around driveways. It has little dark green leaves and in the heat of summer often turns to little brown stubs that hurt like heck if you walk barefooted across them. The name knotweed comes from the fleshy hard knots at every node or joint where the leaves emerge. One way to deal with this weed is to apply a preemerge herbicide, also known as crabgrass preventers, in the fall. Most of the standard preemerge products are effective against, and labeled for, knotweed. You will likely still need to follow up with a repeat treatment for crabgrass in early April - in fact this fall treatment can give you a wider window for treatment as early emerging crabgrass will likely be controlled. If you are reseeding next spring don't use a pre-emerge now and fall back on post emerge combo herbicides like Trimec, Weed-Out, Weed-B-Gon or Weed Free Zone in mid March. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Winter Travel Safety

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. It isn't even Thanksgiving and we've already seen snow twice this year with nearly as much snow as we had all of last winter. This should serve as a great wake up call that it's time to get your frame of mind and your car into winter travel mode. Sadly, for whatever reason, we have far too many people out on the road this time of year traveling on long trips or just back and forth to work that act like it's summer all the time. So first of all, regardless of the form of precipitation this time of year, liquid, frozen or a mix, back off and slow down. I had a high school drivers ed teacher tell me: that once the road gets water covered and especially snow or ice covered you should always drive like you have an egg between your foot and the brake or the accelerator. Allow more distance between you and the car ahead of you. Speed limits are maximum speeds not minimum speeds and the law says that drivers should adjust their speeds with conditions. Start slowly and stop slowly. It doesn't matter if you're in an SUV, a 4-wheel drive truck or a sports car. If the coefficient of friction between your tires and the road equals zero, you are then in a toboggan and have no control! Keep emergency supplies in your vehicle. I've been trapped in a blizzard - it's no fun. Have emergency supplies, blankets and extra clothing, hats, gloves. I've seen a lot of you in chilly weather in shorts and no coat. Not smart in a snow storm. Lastly, always keep your vehicle at least half full of fuel. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Horseradish

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. There's not a lot of garden plants I haven't tried to grow, but horseradish is one. Once it is established being a perennial, you can harvest some and let some stay in the ground for future years. Horseradish is normally harvested or dug, after a hard freeze kills the foliage. Dig up the bigger roots and keep the smaller pencil sized ones to replant or give to friends to plant. To process horseradish, wash the roots, peel and cut into sections. The rest of this you may want to do in the garage or outdoors. The potency of horseradish, a cousin to wasabi by the way, is found in the vapors coming off the product, hence the warning to do this outdoors. Use a food processor or blender to chop the roots up along with a small amount of water and a couple of ice cubes. The bite of the horseradish starts to develop immediately on processing. The intensity of the horseradish can be adjusted by adding vinegar or lemon juice to stop the process. When you open the food processor, make sure it is facing away from you, preferably with the wind at your back blowing the vapors away! You add 2 to 3 tablespoons per cup of horseradish, plus ½ teaspoon of salt, to arrest the process. If you add the vinegar or lemon juice immediately after processing you will have a very mild horseradish. If you wait several minutes you will have a very strong horseradish, or perhaps a very VERY strong horseradish. Store the ground horseradish in a tightly sealed jar in the refrigerator until ready for use. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Odds and ends (soil prep, keep compost pile moist, rabbit protection)

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. November can be, and normally is, a time of rapid transition. Early November can be very fall like with crisp warm days allowing you to get a lot done. A mere 30 days later we are past Thanksgiving and rolling into December and it can be very wintry like. Once again we have seen those kinds of changes this year. Let's talk about several items this morning. We all know that tilling gardens in the fall can allow you to have an early jump on the gardening season in the spring. Given the moisture that we've received, the snow and much cooler temperatures, we now have wet soils and I think the fall soil tillage season is pretty well over. What is just starting however is rabbit and even rodent damage on the tender bark of young trees. If you see an abundance of rabbits in your yard and you have new trees make a 2 foot tall cylinder of 1 inch mesh chicken wire wrapped around the base of the tree. There are also plastic wraps and liquid repellents which can work. Repellents need to be reapplied after each precipitation event though! Lastly, if you've made a compost pile of leaves you may need to turn it periodically and make sure that the outer edges stay moist.

Decomposition can occur well into winter as the composting process makes it own heat but the microbes also need moisture, oxygen and some nitrogen. Adding any nitrogen fertilizer and making sure the compost pile doesn't dry out will keep the process working. Often all you need is a sprinkler can to keep them moist. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.