Gardening with Chuck for September 3 - 9, 2018

Reblooming Perennials Out of Season

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 going to happen somewhere in the next few weeks. Plants, especially woody plants, that normally bloom in the spring only, will show up with a few blossoms. It may be a fruit tree, a lilac, a spirea, it could be almost anything that normally just blooms in the spring. When plants do this it doesn't mean they are about to die. I see it so some extent every year. There's even a word for it: remontant. It simply means blooming or bearing a crop more than once per season. Here's what happens. The flower buds that bloom on these plants in the spring are formed in the mid to late summer. In many cases they have already been formed. They are microscopic in size, but they are there. They have to make those blossom buds now because next spring there isn't time since they bloom fairly soon after they start growing in the spring. Most of the buds will just sit there and wait like they should. But for some reason, some buds don't want to wait. While we aren't sure why some buds don't wait, we do know that summertime stress followed by nice late summer weather, meaning cooler weather with rain in late August or early September, seems to stimulate more buds to break dormancy and bloom. Perhaps the buds think that the heat and drought was the dormant period and the rain and cooler weather was the cue to start blooming. One thing to keep in mind is that if you have a lot of late summer blooming, it will reduce the blooms next spring on that plant. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Power Raking and Core Aerating

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. A lot of the lawn management that homeowners want to do in the spring would actually be better done in late summer and early fall, specifically September and October. Two of these, power raking and core-aerating, are misunderstood and often used inappropriately. Power raking is a thatch control measure and I rarely find lawns that truly need power raking. Go out in your yard and dig down through the growing grass with your hands. If you have to dig through a lot of dead looking vegetation, as in an inch or more, to get to the soil then you have a thatch problem. But if you get down to soil without very much problem, you don't need to power rake. On the other hand, most lawns in our area would benefit from core aerating. Core aerating is done with a heavy machine that pulls plugs of soil out of the yard creating small holes 2.5 to 3 inches deep. Don't confuse a device that has a solid rod that just punches holes in the soil without removing soil. This actually makes things worse. By removing the plugs of soil it allows organic matter to fall into those holes and gives the soil a chance to breath. It's great for reducing compaction. Just leave the soil cores on the surface as they'll break down in a few weeks. You can also core aerate and immediately broadcast grass seed for overseeding. The seed will drop down into the newly created holes and germinate quite nicely. This is one of the few ways that you can broadcast grass seed and expect to get good results! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Webworms

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 noticed an increase in webworm activity which is exactly what I'd expect given that it's the first week of September. Webworms are those caterpillars that feed on tree leaves and make the big webby messes out at the ends of the tree branches. Webworms are colonial insects so you'll find quite a few of the caterpillars if you tear into the web masses. As the caterpillars grow they enclose more foliage in the webs to provide a food source. The webbing provides protection from weather, predators and even insecticidal sprays. We have two webworm species in our area: the fall webworm, which will feed on many different tree species but seems to prefer walnuts, pecans and hickories, and the mimosa webworm which fees on mimosa and honeylocust. Both species have two generations per year. The first is often easily overlooked and the second, which is active now, becomes far more visible because there's far more of them! While unsightly, neither species is truly that big of a threat to the trees. Defoliation is generally not that much of the foliage of a tree and even if it was, late season defoliation is not a threat to the health and vigor of the tree. Don't start cutting or flaming the web masses in the tree. These actions can do far more harm than the feeding does. If you try to spray them you need to have a high enough power sprayer to break the webbing open and few of us have that equipment. The best approach is to ignore them and spend time watching football! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Dividing Daylilies

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Daylilies are vigorous growers and really need to be divided every three to four years to maintain that vigor. If you don't think you want that vigor, keep in mind that this is what helps them bloom prolifically through the summer. If your's aren't blooming prolifically, and you haven't divided them for more than five years, it's time to! Daylilies have a root system that is every bit as tough as they are. One of the most valuable tools that you can have to aid in dividing daylilies is a spading fork, and get two of them while you're at it. If it's only been a few years since you divided your daylilies, you may be able to do it in place. Simply dig down with the spading fork and start peeling off fans that you can plant elsewhere until you've reduced the size of the clump. If it's been way too long since you've divided your daylilies, dig the whole clump up and get it out on top of the ground where you can work on it. Then start inserting the spading forks, back to back, and start working the clump apart into manageable smaller clumps. Your goal is something the size of a head of cauliflower. An alternate method is to throw the clump on the lawn, get out the garden hose and nozzle and start washing the soil off and rolling the roots around on the lawn until you can separate it with your hands. Once the dividing is done dig holes about 24 to 30 inches apart, mix a little bone meal into the bottom of the hole, replant the divisions and water down good to settle the soil. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Is Glyphosate Safe to Use?

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Glyphosate, the active ingredient in the herbicide Round-up has been in the news a lot lately. While I won't get into specifics on the recent court case, I will say that the outcome of that case was NOT based on science. Glyphosate has been around for decades. I first used glyphosate in the late 1970s. There have literally been hundreds of scientific reviews and studies in the United States and around the world regarding the safety of glyphosate. As to absolute toxicity, aspirin, caffeine and salt are all far more toxic than glyphosate. The big question comes down to what is the risk of developing cancer from using glyphosate? The EPA released a draft human health risk assessment that concludes that glyphosate is not likely to be carcinogenic to humans. The assessment also found that there were no other meaningful risks to human health whem the product is used according to the pesticide label. Independent risk assessments from Canada, Japan, Korea, Australia and Europe have concluded the same thing as the EPA risk assessment. Any time there is discussion of any manufactured chemical there seems to be a lot of people who react from emotion, not science. The purpose of science is to remove the emotion and analyze the facts. You may not like glyphosate, or some other manufactured chemical, and that is your right. But when looking at the safety of glyphosate, some of the most conservative countries in the world haven't found a safety issue. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.