

Gardening with Chuck Programs for April 22 - 28, 2019

Fruit Bud Freeze Damage

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. About 10 days ago we had some frosty overnight weather. People with fruit trees, some of them in bloom, were all a twitter about whether they should cover their trees or not and now they are wondering if there was any damage. While every single tree is going to be different and every situation different, what I can tell you is that for all fruit trees, even at bloom and early fruit set, you don't really start to see damage until you hit 28 degrees and we don't expect 90% kill until we get down to 25 degrees. And the tighter the buds were holding, the colder it needs to get. But that 28 and 25 degree for 10 and 90% kill is pretty uniform across all fruit species. Officially we hit 29. I had 29 in Junction City, so at least for the time being, most of those fruit trees and the potential fruit should still be okay. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Rain and Sprays

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. This is the time of year that we are spraying herbicides, insecticides, fungicides and others, and I'm frequently asked about the impact of rains following these pesticide treatments. Well, it all depends.

Herbicides that have dried on the plant before the rainfall are unlikely to be impacted by rain, especially if it's been 24 hours or more. If you are spraying insecticide on your yard to help control chiggers or ticks, a rain may actually help distribute the insecticide all the way to the ground to give better coverage. If you are spraying a fruit tree spray to protect developing fruit from diseases or insects, a little bit of a rain isn't an issue. To make sure that it isn't, consider always using a spreader sticker with fruit tree sprays. If used in combination, even a two inch rain will only reduce efficacy by half. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Spring Lawn Weed Control

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Given the abundance of lawn flowers this year, many people are just having a fit and wanting to spray.

First of all, make sure you have applied a crabgrass preventer type product. If you've got a lot of spring flowering weeds you're set up for crabgrass too! Other than dandelions, all those other spring flowering plants are going to die by June. So consider any lawn herbicide treatment to be going after dandelions. We may have to spray some summer blooming lawn weeds later on, but really, treating for blooming lawn weeds now is only going to make you feel better and not really help the weed situation or lawn health. Focus on getting the lawn thicker and fuller between now and fall and then plan to apply a lawn weed control product in mid to late October. Weed and feed products are good at that time! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Why Does Grass Grow so Fast?

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. One of the questions that I'm asked regularly about this time of year is why does the grass grow so fast early in the season. The answer is very simple - the desire to reproduce. Our lawn grasses are cool season grasses, generally tall fescue and Kentucky bluegrass. When they break dormancy first thing in the spring they immediately shift into reproductive mode. They develop flower stalks, or seed stalks, call them what you want, and these start shooting up quickly. For everyone you clip off the plant will try to make another one until it has gone all the way through it's arsenal of seed stalk buds. Once it's done that, the plant sends up some leaves and then loafs through the rest of spring and summer. So just keep mowing regularly, avoid excessive spring fertilizing, and we'll get to summer mode soon enough! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Ash/Lilac Borer

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Long before we knew what emerald ash borer was, we were dealing with ash/lilac borer. Ash/lilac borer has been here forever. It attacks young ash trees as well as lilac and privet shrubs. Small ash trees that break over half way up, or lilac and privet that develop dead canes every summer are evidence of this pest. As an adult it's a moth that looks like a wasp. It will soon be laying eggs at the base of these plants where the young larvae will hatch out and crawl up the stem or trunk to burrow in and feed. It is controlled effectively using bifenthrin or permethrin sprayed on the lower stems and trunks to the point of runoff. Apply the first spray about the time the Vanhoutte spirea are in full bloom. Then wait four weeks and spray again. For this year, I'd expect that the first treatment will need to be done about May 1st. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.