

## Gardening with Chuck Programs for April 8 - 14, 2019

### Are You Watering Your Lawn?

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I was going to work the other morning and saw an automatic lawn sprinkler system running. I almost screamed out loud! Folks, it's wet, it's early and you shouldn't be running your sprinkler systems yet. The only reason that I could condone running a sprinkler system right now is first of all to make sure it's all working correctly. Secondly to activate an application of crabgrass preventer, but at the rate we're going just wait a few days and you'll get rain, OR to keep newly seeded grass seeds moist to make sure that they get started germinating. Other than that there is absolutely no reason to be running a sprinkler system yet. If anything we need to let that soil profile start to dry out a little bit. There'll be plenty of need to be watering that lawn before the summer is over, but for now, save the water and the money! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Low First Mowing

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I haven't mowed my lawn yet, but it's coming. Many homeowners get in a tizzy and just HAVE to get their lawn mowed. So they start cranking down the lawn mower until they can see that they've done something. Sometimes they go too low and start scalping grass crowns and this leads to serious damage of the turf. For the very first lawn mowing of the year, and maybe the second, you can crank the mower down to 2 inches or even, and I shudder when I say this, 1½ inches. But after that first mowing you get it right back up to 3 or 3½ inches! Low mowing can decrease root mass which makes the lawn less resilient. Low mowing can also expose more bare soil and bare soil at this time of year usually results in more weeds, even when weed preventers are used. Mow it low once and then back to normal! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Star of Bethlehem Control

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. As I've been driving around town the past 10 days I'm seeing a lot of really green clumps of grassy looking stuff in yards. Before much longer the grassy looking clumps will put up a flower stalk with pretty little white flowers. This is Star of Bethlehem and while the flower is pretty in your flower bed, it can be a real nuisance in the yard. Traditional lawn weed control products are sort of weak on star of Bethlehem. A better option, if you want to control these in your yard is to use one of the products that contains carfentrazone. The most commonly found products with this herbicide are Speed Zone and Weed Free Zone. These will give quicker and better control especially under cool conditions. I still recommend spraying on sunny days with temperatures above 50 degrees and with calm winds. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Grass Sandbur Control

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. If you think back to last year and remember getting sandburs in your shoe laces or the cuffs of your pants, also try to remember where in your lawn this happened. Grass sandburs are hard to identify early in the lawn season and by the time they are making the burs, it's almost too late to get good control. Make sure you apply a good crabgrass preventer in these areas. Make sure you are mowing the grass tall to help shade the ground. While the crabgrass preventer will help reduce the number of sandburs, it won't kill them all. You will need to go back to those areas in June and July and use one of the post emerge crabgrass killers that contain quinclorac. This is usually in a lawn weed killer product and almost always has and or plus crabgrass killer. Spray a couple of times 3 to 4 weeks apart. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Brown Junipers

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. It's that time of year when about half of the junipers start to take on an odd brownish cast. Now, if there has been fire nearby, as in a burned pasture, this is likely heat damage. But for everywhere else, it's just a cedar tree doing it's thing. Cedar trees are blooming now and there are separate male and female trees. Female blossoms are very tiny and very unassuming. But male blossoms are big brown buds on the ends of the branches. And on a calm warm morning, these blossoms break open and loads of pollen are released in the hopes that a single pollen grain lands on a female blossom. As slight wind gusts hit these trees they literally explode in pollen looking like dust on a dirt road or smoke rolling out of the stand of cedar trees. If the brown on your cedars is only at the ends of your branches, it will soon pass! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.