

Gardening with Chuck Programs for January 14 - 20, 2019

Starting Your Own Transplants

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. One way to deal with spring fever and possibly get higher quality transplants and the cultivars that you want is to start your own transplants from seed. To do this you need a frame to put fluorescent lights on adjustable hangers. If you don't have supplemental light, even with a bright window, you'll get spindly tall plants. Next you need to get some flats with 24, 36 or 48 cells per flat. Next some good potting mix, NOT garden soil. That's a big mistake. Then sit down with a calendar. You need to know when transplant time is for the different crops and then how long it takes to get desired vegetables from seeding up to transplant size. For example, tomatoes we plant around the first week of May and it takes 6 weeks to get them to transplant size. So you don't want to start tomatoes until late March. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Bagworms

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. The first week of January I had someone in the office talking to me about bagworms. They had them bad last year like most of us did. It's pretty well expected that they're going to be just as bad this year. It's going to take a few years to work through this cycle. Unfortunately, because the bagworm eggs don't hatch until late May or early June, there's nothing you can do now except pulling the bags off the trees and shrubs. You can pull them all off OR give them a squeeze. If they squeeze flat easily they are empty. If there's some resistance like something's inside, then they're full of eggs. If you do this I would pull them all off and then put them in the trash or burn them. Dropping them on the ground won't help. Get the ones you can and then just wait for June when it'll be time to treat for them again! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

My Garlic is Coming Up!

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I planted my garlic the third week of October like I always do. Sometimes it comes up in the fall, sometimes it doesn't. November was cool so it didn't come up last fall. The second week of December there were no shoots above the ground. But checking the garlic patch the first weekend of January and there were quite a few little shoots starting to show up. That's not a problem - cold weather, with or without snow isn't going to hurt it - the stuff is really tough. But it does indicate that if, like me, you didn't get the garlic mulched last fall, you want to get it done in about the next 6 or 8 weeks. Use good quality wheat straw or some old rotten silage. Don't bury the bed but try to get a nice loose layer scattered over the beds. The mulch will help control weeds this spring, keep the ground cool and reduce water loss! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Starting Onions Indoors

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. If you go to the nursery to buy onions you'll either buy plants or sets. Sets are the little dry bulbs that don't go by name other than red, yellow or white. Onion plants are named and probably the best way to go if you want big known onions. But there's an option for the brave gardeners and that's to start onions from seed and develop your own transplants. It's kind of challenging and you need to see me about the directions as there are some tricks to help you be successful. But since we can plant onions in late March and very early April, you need to start now to have the 6 to 8 weeks of growth before planting. You need to be particular about your cultivars as you want to get varieties that are intermediate day length types. If your catalog doesn't tell you what the length is, call me up. I have my sources! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Can I Use Old Garden Seed?

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. You wouldn't believe how many times gardeners ask me about using old garden seed. I ask them if they know how long they've had it and they usually don't. Most seed packages have a "packed for" date on them. If they don't have a date, throw them out. If they do have a date, throw them out. If they are in the carrot family, parsley, parsnips, carrots, throw them out. If they are a large seeded plant like beans or sweet corn, they were packed for 2018, and they were in the house, okay, those are probably still good. Basically though, if you find old seed packages, throw them out. Most of us aren't using that many seeds that it's overly expensive to buy new each year. Seeds are, or were, a living organism. If you have have a package of seeds that spent a year, or more, in a garage, just forget it. Throw 'em out and get new! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.