

### Little Barley

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Little barley is a grassy weed that just keeps spreading like crazy. It's a short grass with a tight compact head that will soon be maturing and dying and then those little badminton shuttlecock seeds will be getting stuck in your pantlegs and pets paws. And they can hurt! Unfortunately, there is NOTHING that you can do about it now. Little barley starts growing in September and October so your crabgrass preventer in late winter does nothing to stop it. Take pictures to help you remember where it is and then plan, in early September to apply a crabgrass preventer with surflan or dithiopyr to control it this fall. Since it does only move in to thin areas also take steps to get your fescue or bluegrass lawn thicker with tall mowing and fall fertilization. If you want to overseed this fall, don't use a herbicide treatment! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## June Gardens

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. For many of us, trying to get our vegetable gardens planted has been frustrating as heck. The good news is that there is still time to get a lot of things planted. Beans can be planted clear through July.

Eggplants, tomatoes and peppers can still go in the ground. You sure won't get the earliest tomatoes, but you will get tomatoes. Sweet potatoes and sweet corn can be planted clear to the end of June. Melons, summer squash and pumpkins can all be planted along with cucumbers but get started on it soon. And we are just now getting into prime time for planting winter squash.

And here's the secret that not enough gardeners know. July actually STARTS the fall gardening season. You can plant potatoes in early July for a fall harvest then cole crops in late July and early August and other crops later! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Mulching Tomatoes

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Tomatoes can really benefit from mulching but a couple of words of warning with that. First, don't use grass clippings unless they are from lawns not treated with herbicides and only after the clippings dry down. Wheat straw makes a much better mulch. Mulch does keep soil cooler, helps suppress weeds and can preserve soil moisture in hotter and drier summer weather. This year we aren't currently worried about conserving soil moisture, in fact we'd like to get rid of some. So if you haven't mulched yet, you may just want to wait a little while yet. The ground has also been slow to warm up. So get the mulch ready - whatever mulch you are going to use - and wait for the soils to warm up and dry out. Then please listen to tomorrow's Gardening with Chuck as I talk more about cautions with grass clippings! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Be careful with using grass clippings for mulch

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I'm not a fan of bagging grass clippings. They are chock full of nutrients that can be recycled if you leave them on the lawn and let them break down. But in years like this it's sometimes necessary to bag and remove the clippings or else you'll be swathing and baling! Many homeowners like to use those grass clippings as mulch but you need to be careful. The first 3 to 4 cuttings after a herbicide application should not be collected as there could be some herbicide residue that would damage sensitive plants. And especially if you've used a crabgrass killer that contains the herbicide quinclorac, never ever use grass clippings from these yards for mulch. I've seen some data that the herbicide can remain active in the clippings for a year following the treatment. Best solution is to just not bag! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Spring flowering bulb foliage

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. After our tulips and daffodils and other spring flowering bulbs bloom we always encourage you to clip off the flower stalk but leave the foliage on so that the leaves can carry on photosynthesis and put food back into the bulbs. Which means as the spring moves along the old foliage gets uglier and uglier. Well, this is the time of year that regardless, for most bulbs, even if the leaves aren't brown, it's okay to carefully trim off those leaves at ground level. Don't grab them and yank as you can pull up bulbs or at least cause damage. BUT, before you remove that foliage make a little map to help you remember where that foliage is. The reason being that come late September or October you want to fertilize those bulbs, even though they aren't growing, and since the leaves are removed, you need a map! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.