

## Gardening with Chuck Programs for March 25 - 31, 2019

How late can I plant potatoes and peas?

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Here it is the last week of March and many gardeners are developing a nervous tic as they wait for their gardens to dry out. I've been waiting for someone to ask me how late they can plant potatoes and peas. Well, amazingly I was able to get a row of peas planted on Friday, not to rub it in or anything. Anyway, we still have several weeks of planting time for both of these. I draw the line after about the 21<sup>st</sup> of April. The period before we get hot weather just gets too short for either of these crops to do well. Keep in mind though that you can still plant a second crop of potatoes the very end of June or through much of July for an October potato harvest. This doesn't work well for peas though. Peas really don't like hot weather which is why we plant them early. July just isn't a good time to plant peas. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Peach and Apricot Bloom Frost Tolerance

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. This is the first year in a long long time that I did not see apricot blossoms before the first of March. Fresh apricots and peaches from your own tree are a wonderful treat. The problem with growing them locally though is that they are prone to breaking dormancy too early because of untimely early warm spells, and then they get their blooms frosted. Does this mean we'll have apricots and peaches this year? No. It's simply too early to tell. We're still a month away from average last frost. We'll just have to wait and see. Those blossoms could pop fast with warm weather. Once we start to see color in those buds it only takes a low of 25 degrees to start damaging them and once they are blooming, a couple hours of 27 or below will do them in. There's nothing we can do but wait and hope for nice weather! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Asparagus Bed Spring Management

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Asparagus will start pushing above ground any day now. Make sure your bed is ready by first removing all of last year's growth and apply a couple pounds of general fertilizer per 20 foot of row. If you don't see any new growth yet you can control any existing weeds with glyphosate. If you see new spears, hand weeding is your only option. Once the bed is weed free, or has been treated, apply a garden weed preventer that contains trifluralin. Check the label to make sure that asparagus is listed on the label. Mulching will also help reduce weed pressure. Once the bed is being harvested there are no weed control products labeled for use. At the end of the harvest season you can remove all the asparagus foliage, treat with glyphosate again and apply another treatment of weed preventer for the season. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Shade Turf

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I routinely field questions from homeowners who are bringing in soil samples for problem areas in their yard where the grass doesn't do well. They reseed it in the spring or fall. The grass comes up good and looks great but then as the summer goes on it just thins out. Sometimes this can be from planting the wrong kind of grass. Occasionally we do find phosphorus deficiencies, but this is usually shown by grass that germinates but just doesn't grow. It doesn't die, but doesn't grow. When the grass comes up and then starts to thin out the most common problem is shade or not enough sunlight. To thrive, really thrive, grass needs 6 to 8 hours of direct sunlight during the summer. If shade is your problem you can try one of the true fine leaf fescues. But if the area gets a lot of wind, it probably won't survive. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Don't Rush Tree Planting

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. It doesn't matter whether it's shade trees, small ornamental trees or fruit trees, you want to be careful and not rush planting. The ground is very wet and cold right now. Planting too soon will result with you digging in mud. This results in a compacted cloddy mess that isn't going to allow the tree to thrive. You want to wait until the ground is mellow and doesn't come up with big wet clods. Then dig an area 2 to 3 times wider than the root ball. And a little bit deeper. Mix some organic matter into the soil and under the tree. Then be sure to plant the tree with the crown right at ground level and firm, but not pack the organic matter and soil mix around the root ball, mounding it up slightly because the soil will settle when you water it in. Then use mulch to keep a grass free zone around the tree. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.