

## Gardening with Chuck Programs for November 4 - 10, 2019

### Not Too Late for Spring Bulbs

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. In the fall, clear up until the end of the year, as long as the ground isn't frozen, you can still plant spring flowering bulbs. It's not necessarily ideal, but you can do it. Who knows, maybe you got one heck of a deal somewhere on some close out bulbs, maybe you just found some you forgot you had. It doesn't matter, get them in the ground. The same rules apply as always - make sure they are planted at the recommended depth. The ground shouldn't be too wet right now so that's not a concern. Make sure that you carefully put the soil back in the hole and settle it with a little water to make sure that there aren't any air voids. Lastly, planting spring flowering bulbs late will delay somewhat when they bloom next spring due to the delayed start they got this fall. But that's only for the first spring. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Arguments for NOT Raking Leaves

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Some homeowners can't wait for the first leaf to fall so they can start raking and bagging the leaves. Truth is though that most of this does nothing for the health of the lawn, in fact it may be counterproductive. If you take the time to regularly mow over the leaves on your lawn in the fall you mulch them up allowing them to filter down into the turf where they'll break down and return nutrients to the soil. Leaving a lot of this leaf litter on the lawn can also be beneficial to some species of butterflies, moths and even birds. If you get a lot of leaves that become a matted down mess from rain or snow it may well be advisable to remove them to keep from smothering the grass. But as long as you can see more than 50% of the grass, you don't have too many. And then there's the wind... I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Winter Prep of Hoses and Watering Systems

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Normally by the first full week of November we'd just be starting to expect temperatures down into the mid 20s.

This year we've had them for quite some time already. Hopefully you have remembered to get your irrigation system shut off and flushed out. Most of that is underground enough that we probably haven't seen any freezing issues unless you have a head that didn't fully drain out. Take time to get the water shut off and the lines fully drained or blown out with compressed air. Hoses should also be disconnected from external faucets even freeze proof faucets. Also take off nozzles or anything from the end of the hose. Water remaining in these can freeze and damage the item. High quality hoses can remain outside but life of the hose will be longer if they are drained and put inside over winter. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Prepping Mums for Winter

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. It has been my observation that some gardeners want to have everything in their yard perfectly manicured heading into winter. I, on the other hand, feel that leaving a lot of the current year's growth on perennial plants will go a long ways to helping those plants, and other critters survive the winter. Mums are one of those things that I really want to just leave until next spring. Lots of creatures will hide in among those plants and they'll trap leaves and debris around them as a form of winter time mulch. If you chose to cut off the top growth of the mums leave stems 2 to 3 inches tall then apply a layer of mulch over the top of the mums after the ground has frozen or if they are calling for a sharp temperature drop. IF it stays dry during the winter, water the mum bed along with any evergreen shrubs. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Late Season Turf Nitrogen

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. This has been an odd year and an odd fall but I think many things that we normally do with our lawns can certainly stay on track. If you've already treated for broadleaf weeds and fertilized once if not twice, then your lawn is probably set for the winter. If you haven't fertilized at all or only fertilized once then you could consider applying another round of nitrogen fertilizer as we head deeper into autumn. You want to apply 1 to 1½ pounds of soluble or fast release nitrogen. This is not the time of year to use slow release nitrogen as you want the fertilizer to move into the soil with the first little snow or rain shower. The cool season grasses will still be carrying on photosynthesis for several more weeks and the food produced goes into the crown and other storage organs of the plant for use first thing in the spring. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.