

## Gardening with Chuck Programs for October 28 - November 3, 2019

### Dormant Season Planting

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. As we rapidly approach November the ground is cooling down enough that in about another two weeks we can begin dormant season turfgrass planting. Dormant season planting is just like it sounds. You are planting grass seed into soil cold enough that we know it isn't going to germinate until spring when the soil temperatures begin to warm up. This only works with cool season grasses - no buffalo or Bermudagrass. You plant it just like you would earlier in the fall either with a power seeder or till the soil up spread the seed and then rake and pack it in. I would tend to plant on the upper range of the seeding rate. Fescue we say to plant 6 to 8 pounds of seed per 1,000 square feet. In early fall or spring I'd plant 6 pounds, but for dormant season I'd plant the full 8 pounds. Then forget about it until spring. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Is it safe to eat?

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Temperatures are falling and warm season crops are basically done thanks to wintery like weather we've had. I had someone call last week wanting to know if tomato fruits, yes, they are fruits, just don't put them in a fruit salad, were safe to eat after a frost. Yes they are - they do not become toxic. However, they may well become mushy. If that is the case and they are ripe, you can use them in any recipes where they will be cooked down or pureed or anything like that. If you picked greenish tomatoes earlier and got them out of the hard freeze weather, they'll be fine. But if they are green and hard frozen, toss them out. Remember that once it warms up, and the frozen plants dry up, get them out of the garden and into a burn pile or the trash. Tomato vines should never be composted because of diseases. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Understand you plant

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. The ever popular houseplant often becomes an endangered species when they enter many people's homes.

This is because the new houseplant owner approaches it's care without every knowing what the plant wants or needs. They haven't taken the time to understand what that plant needs.

Houseplants come from many different ecosystems from the six continents where plants currently grow. Yet homeowners never take the time to learn what that species needs for light, water, fertility or temperature. Whatever my house is becomes what the plant will get. Take time to study up on a species before you buy it. Contact me at the Extension Office. Look it up on the internet, then check with me to see if the internet had it right (it often doesn't by the way). Work hard to learn WHAT that plant needs! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Don't over water your houseplants

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Many people take houseplants outside in the spring and bring them back in for the winter. Their reasons for doing this are many, and amazingly many of the plants survive the winter in spite of what the homeowners do. Most houseplants that die when they are brought in do so from overwatering, not underwatering. Humans are a time and calendar oriented species. I water my houseplants every Saturday morning because that's what I can remember to do. Houseplants don't have watches and they don't care about the calendar. Their water usage varies from day to day and week to week as daylength and sunlight intensity change. You should learn to check the soil moisture every few days by feeling the soil. Once the soil starts to dry out, water. The time will change based on outdoor weather. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Cold Weather and Tree Leaves

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. With temperatures into the 20s things are coming to a skidding halt in the old outdoor plant world. Some trees had been showing some really good color, others so so and a few were just starting to change. Many trees are likely just going to be dropping leaves like crazy now. But sometimes trees don't drop leaves, they just die and hang on. Some trees, like pin oaks, do this every year, but not most trees. When this happens it is called marcescence. The leaf dies before it has a chance to develop an abscission layer at the base of the leaf. Many things can cause this to happen. This year it will most likely be caused by dry conditions in August and September which may have halted growth when abscission layers should be forming. While it looks weird, the tree is likely going to be just fine! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.