

## Gardening with Chuck Programs for July 13 - 19, 2020

### Green June Beetles

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Green June beetles are once again active and flying around our neighborhoods often clumsily running into many stationary objects like our houses or even ourselves. They often startle homeowners who think that they are bees. These large dark green beetles with a pronounced narrow and tiny looking head are not a threat to you, but they are to your fruit trees if you have peaches or pears that are starting to ripen. These rascals will start feeding on ripening fruit. Their feeding will attract others and they can destroy fruit quickly. Standard fruit tree insecticides will control them but you have to get the spray right on them. The challenge is that you are limited to how often you can spray. It does help if you keep fruit that has fallen off the tree cleaned up off the ground so as not to attract more beetles. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Over-fertilizing Brings Problems

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I would say that far more gardeners under fertilize than over fertilize their gardens, especially with nitrogen. But every once in a while I'll get that phone call that the tomato plants look wonderful but there's no blossoms or very few blossoms. This is classic over fertilizing with nitrogen. Plants use nitrogen to make green growth - in the case of tomatoes that's leaves and stems. Phosphorus is really critical for flower and fruit production. So if you go a little bit overboard on the nitrogen and it isn't balanced with the phosphorus levels the tomato plant will put all of it's effort into leaves. It'll be so busy producing leaves, flower and thereby fruit production will be ignored. Which is one of the reasons I like to have a soil test so we can keep everything in balance so your garden plants don't get out of whack! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Spider Mites

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Twice last week I had to look at burning bushes that were looking funny and the leaves were falling off. The culprit was spider mites. Spider mites aren't an insect, they have 8 legs like ticks and spiders. Mites are tiny and they are usually on the backs of leaves. Their feeding leaves lots of little yellow dots called stippling. You can often see a lot of very fine webbing. Many times it's easier to hold the leaf over a blank piece of paper and tap it a few times then look for little dots on the paper that are moving. Often a strong stream of water sprayed on the undersides of the leaves will wash them off. Sometimes a good driving rain with lots of wind will take care of the problem. A lot of our modern insecticides will not control mites, especially good old sevin. Make sure mites are on the label if you spray. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Time to Start Fall Gardening

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. It's the middle of July and you aren't thinking fall, but if you're a gardener you should be! The fall gardening season starts in July and that's to give you the lead time you need to get crops mature before they freeze off! During the month of July there are several things you can plant starting with potatoes. The key here is to get seed potatoes. Freshly harvested potatoes generally have built in dormancy that prevents them from growing and potatoes from the grocery store have often been sprayed with sprout inhibitors. But if you can get some good seed potatoes or you have old potatoes that are sprouting, plant them. Cole crops can be planted throughout the month if you can find the transplants. The latter half of July and early August is also a good time to plant carrots and beets or another crop of snap beans! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## False Chinch Bugs

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. About two weeks ago I had a jar full of bugs brought in to me for identification. Then about five days after that friends in Nebraska sent me some photos and video of the same thing. Thousands of little bugs were just all over the ground making it look like it was alive and moving. In both cases we were dealing with false chinch bugs and we were witnessing a population explosion of them. Since they were immatures they couldn't fly, they could only walk. While they can feed on many plants species they tend to be fondest of anything in the mustard family. We often don't see damage in our lawns or gardens from these so we usually don't have to treat them. But what we've seen in previous false chinch bug population explosions has been that come fall, they wander into our homes. Be prepared! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.