

Gardening with Chuck Programs for July 6 - 12, 2020

Prepare for Brown Patch

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Starting last week we moved into a stretch of pretty typical Kansas summer weather with high humidity and overnight lows that many nights doesn't drop below 70. When we get into these kinds of conditions we start to see a disease in tall fescue lawns called brown patch. Brown patch is a leaf disease that normally doesn't kill the plant, it just makes it look sick for a while. The organism that causes it is always in the soil so when conditions are right, here it comes. Fungicides applied before the disease really cranks up can help keep the disease in check. But it's better to just manage around it and know that it'll get better with cooler weather. Avoid over fertilizing. Avoid watering in the evening, early morning only, and then infrequently and deeply. Patience time and cooler weather will fix the problem. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Use Bolting Onions First

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. It doesn't matter if you plant onions from seed, sets or plants, you will find onions that send up flower stalks in a process that we call bolting. When onions bolt early in the season it is in response to some form of stress. For Kansas that can be a cold snap in the spring, for early planted onions, or heat stress later on in the season. The plant essentially panics and decides it needs to send up a flower stalk so it can make seed before it dies. If you have onion plants that do this just clip the flower head off. If you have a lot of onions doing this it may mean that we need to visit about your onion management to try to reduce the stress level or find a different cultivar to plant that may be better suited. When you dig your onions, any plants that bolted should be set aside to use first as they won't last as long in storage. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Tomato Leaf Spot Diseases

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We have two common leaf diseases on tomatoes that show up every year. One is septoria leaf spot and the other is early blight. They both cause brown spots on leaves and eventually kill the leaves. They both start on the bottom of the plant and work their way up. Rotating where you plant your tomatoes can help as the diseases overwinter on old foliage. Cleaning everything off the garden helps also. You can start spraying fungicides early but you need to be sure to spray all the leaves and both the upper and lower leaf surfaces. Chlorothalonil is the best fungicide choice as it has a 0 day waiting period until harvest. If chlorothalonil isn't working you can use mancozeb but be aware that mancozeb has a 5 day waiting period. Also, as lower leaves become infected, go ahead and remove them from the plant. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Controlling Bermudagrass

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. While Bermudagrass is desired by some homeowners for their lawns, just about everyone else considers it a weed. People call me up and ask how to control Bermudagrass and I tend to laugh! If you have Bermudagrass in your yard you can temporarily kill it out, you can push it back, you can overseed, but if your neighbors do nothing, it will be back! IF you want to kill it out and replant in September, start now. Spray with glyphosate, wait two weeks and spray again. Spray further than you think it is growing because it will be further out than you think. Watering a week after the first spraying will help you see what was missed. If necessary maybe even spray a third time. Then mow you grass short and in early September get a power seeder and seed fescue or bluegrass right into the dead sod. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Japanese Beetles

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I haven't seen any yet, but Japanese Beetles will be showing up on roses near you soon. Japanese Beetle adults will be out feeding, mating and laying eggs for 4 to 6 weeks. They love roses but feed on many plants. They are a scarab like our typical June beetles but are native to Japan, naturally. Their larval form is a white grub that feeds on the roots of plants. Adults can be sprayed with any number of lawn and garden insecticides but early morning visits to the yard with a bucket of soapy water to knock them into works well also. While Japanese Beetle traps are available I do not encourage using them. Beetles are attracted to them but many never wind up in the trap, they just gather together and feed on your plants. You're better off not to use them, or give them to your neighbors so the beetles go there! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.