

## Garlic Harvest

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. If you planted your garlic last fall then you are probably getting ready for garlic harvest. Unlike onions that we normally wait until all the foliage is pretty dried down, you want to harvest garlic when it still has 4 to 6 green leaves on it. Each leaf corresponds to one of the thin membranes that are around the bulb. Each of those membranes or bulb wrappers, provide protection for the bulb and extend the storage life. The same is true for onions by the way. So we harvest when there are still 4 to 6 green leaves on the plant. We carefully dig them up, and knock off what dirt we can then tie the plants together in bundles of no more than ten and hang them up in a dry location, or lay out just a few bulbs on an old window screen. Let them hang until the necks are totally dry then clip necks and roots and store in mesh bags. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Watch the Tomato Fertilizer

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Gardeners have a tendency to like the fertilizer. How do I know this? I see the soil test results come across my desk and 90% of them have very high phosphorus and potassium levels which are generally only going to come about from years of excessive fertilization. Tomatoes can develop all sorts of problems especially from heavy nitrogen fertilization. Blossom end rot is one of those things. Nitrogen causes lots of green vegetative growth. Excessive top growth occurs and the roots are struggling to catch up and then we see blossom end rot. Even the choice of nitrogen fertilizer can make blossom end rot worse. For tomato fertilization I like to use calcium nitrate as it's not an ammonium source of nitrogen. Apply 1½ cups of calcium nitrate per 30 foot of row or 90 square feet, now and again in 4 weeks. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Tree Stress

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Trees are subject to stress just like we are. The problem with trees is that they can experience what's known as accumulated stress. If you know the story of the straw that broke the camel's back then you've got the picture. The summer of 2018 was dry, after a dry fall and winter. Trees were losing root mass. Then in late summer of 2018 and through summer of 2019 it turned off excessively wet. Now we head into this summer with instant heat. Trees are stressed. They will lose leaves if for no other reason than to reduce water use. On younger trees, less than 4 or 5 years old. Water them slowly once every few weeks with a slow open hose. Don't fertilize them either. Fertilization encourages them to grow and adds more stress. Just know it's a tough time for trees right now. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Slime Molds

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. There is a primitive organism that is common around us but often overlooked. They are known as slime molds and they can look like many things. One form grows on grass and looks like someone dumped charcoal powder on the leaf blades. Another form looks like someone dumped a bunch of scrambled eggs and another form is often called the dog vomit form. Slime mold spores float around in the air and under the right conditions they land on some substrate like grass, mulch or even just the ground and then they grow very quickly. While unsettling and sometimes disgusting, they are harmless. They get their food and water out of the air. They are often gone as quickly as they show up. Slime molds can be picked up with a shovel and tossed or just stirred up. But no treatments are needed. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Bagworms on Fruit Trees

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Bagworms are out there and if you have a tree or shrub that has leaves you are likely to find them feeding on those leaves. About the only thing I don't see them feeding on much is pine trees. Anyway, you need to be checking your fruit trees as well. Once again this year I had bagworms on my apple trees - they do seem to leave the pear trees alone - but not only do they eat the leaves, they'll also eat the skin right off those little green apples. You need to get on those fairly soon if you haven't already. Most fruit tree sprays that have an insecticide component will control these but you need to apply a lot of carrier. Most labels for the organic control product spinosad do include fruit trees on the label so that is perfectly safe to use as well. In fact spinosad will also control codling moth in apples, but get them sprayed! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.