

## Gardening with Chuck Programs for March 23 - 29, 2020

### Unusual Times for All of Us

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. The COVID-19 virus has shattered normality around the globe unlike anything most of us have ever seen. At this time the Extension office is closed to the public until at least April 6<sup>th</sup>. We will be answering phones and doing as much as we can to answer your questions. We are trying to limit face to face encounters for everyone's safety. If you need me to look at something call the office 238-4161 and we'll work out a procedure. You can email me questions at [cotte@ksu.edu](mailto:cotte@ksu.edu). If the office is closed PLEASE leave a message including your name, phone number and brief description of the problem. I'll get that message will get back to you. Plants don't care about a coronavirus and may need attention. I'm still here to help you, it's just that the process will be a little different for a few weeks. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Brown Red Cedars

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I drive by some cedars every day that were caught by a wildfire. The bottoms of those cedars are brown because of fire and heat. But many other cedars around the region are turning very brown right now as well. If they haven't been exposed to a fire, there still isn't anything likely wrong with them. Cedars have separate male and female trees. Right now the male cedar trees are rapidly developing the flower buds which are out on the ends of the branches. If you look closely at these brown cedars you can see something that looks like a cross between a pine cone and a hand grenade. These will soon be releasing pollen that will look like smoke coming out of stands of cedars. Once the trees get through blooming, the remains of all those male flowers will drop off and the tree will green right back up. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Turf in the Shade

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I tell homeowners time and time again that lawn grasses are species of the sun. They need a lot of full sun during the day as in 8 hours in the middle of summer preferred. That's for cool season grasses. Even a little shade will inhibit the growth of warm season grasses. I see homeowners annually reseeding parts of their yards that are under trees to thicken up the grass. The grass comes up fine and then as summer proceeds, the new grass recedes as in thins out. Tall fescue is going to have the most shade tolerance. The true fine leaf fescues like creeping red have MORE shade tolerance than tall fescue, but they have far less heat tolerance so they tend to be rather short lived. If you have shady areas where the grass keeps thinning out consider switching to shade tolerant ground covers. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Apricots, Peaches and Frost

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. It got pretty chilly late last week. Apricots and peaches, contrary to popular belief are not damaged by late frosts. Most of the frosts that kill the blossoms are right on time and expected. It's just that too many homeowners plant their apricots and peaches in too warm and sunny of a spot so they break dormancy and bloom earlier than they should! Apples and pears, at least at my house, are still holding tight enough bud that the weather wasn't an issue. Any apricot or peach flower buds that were still holding pretty tight aren't going to be damaged by temperatures in the 20s even down to 20. Once the blossoms start to open though they can be damaged by temperatures 27 and lower. The spread between 10% blossom kill and 90% blossom kill is only about 5 degrees. Hopefully most buds are hanging tight! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Tree Planting Tips

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Most young trees die, or at least fail to thrive, because of errors made before and during the planting process. Over the next several weeks, as we head into tree planting season, I'm going to offer several tips on how to be successful with tree plantings in your yard. The first tip is the right tree for the right place. All too often we go at this tree planting backwards. We decide we want a red maple for example. We go and buy a red maple and then figure out where we have room in our yard. Start by figuring out where in your yard you want a tree. Then decide what size of tree as well as the site characteristics such as how sunny, is the site well drained or poorly drained, is it exposed to wind. Once you know all of these things you can start looking at the trees to fill that spot. Contact me for more tree information. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.