

Gardening with Chuck Programs for March 30 - April 4, 2020

Clover Mites

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Clover mites are tiny bright red mites that overwinter in lawn areas and then on warm sunny days this time of year they come swarming up on the sides of houses. They are so small that they can go right under even a tight fitting storm window and wind up inside. Even though they will feed on turfgrasses they rarely damage the turf. But if you manage to smash one on a wall you'll have a bright red stain. I normally just encourage residents to ride it out because once the weather warms up clover mites usually just disappear. If they are causing problems, or just basically freaking you out, spray the lawn area out away from the house where they've been seen congregating, with a lawn and garden insecticide. Look for one with a built in applicator you attach to your hose. Also spray up on the foundation several feet. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Knotweed

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I was out in the yard last week and along the edge of the driveway I saw hundreds of little seedlings emerging from the hard compacted soil. I thought to myself, here comes the knotweed! Knotweed is an annual weed that thrives in open or semi open areas along driveways, walking paths, basically any place with heavy compacted soils where other plants struggle to grow. Knotweed gets its name from the fleshy knot on the stem at each node. It starts off a dark green color and is a soft supple plant at first. But as the summer moves on it becomes woody and stiff and a nuisance. Early in the season it is fairly easy to control with most broadleaf weed killers like trimec, weed-b-gon, weedout and weed free zone. No need to spray the entire lawn, concentrate on areas along gravel driveways and paths. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

April Brings New Planting Opportunities

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. April!!!! This is when spring, hopefully, really starts to take off and if the garden is dry enough you can be busy planting like crazy. All of the vegetable crops that you can plant in March can be planted on into at least the first half of April including the likes of cole crops like cabbage and broccoli, beets, lettuce, potatoes, radishes, onions, peas, spinach and turnips. Once we get to about mid April we can start planting collards, Swiss chard, carrots another round of lettuce and by the last half of April you can start planting cantaloupe and watermelon. Remember not to work the soil if it is wet. Many vegetable crops can benefit from a side dressing with nitrogen about 3 weeks into the growing season, keep weeds controlled through hoeing or mulching and if it starts to get dry, be sure to water regularly I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Crabgrass Preventer Application Timing

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I'm going straight to the heart this morning. Crabgrass preventers. If you have a product containing Dimension, active ingredient dithiopyr, or Barricade, active ingredient prodiamine, then you can apply these at the recommended rate anytime and not have to worry about a second application. If you are using anything else most likely something that contains pendimethalin or Team, which is benefin plus trifluralin, I would wait until we see full bloom on the redbuds to apply these and then know that to get season long control you will have to reapply later in the season, usually about 8 weeks after the first application but read the label to be sure. Once any of these products are applied you will need a quarter to one half inch of rain or irrigation to get the products watered into the soil and activated. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Growing Large Onions

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We grow onions in gardens for two purposes - one is scallions or green onion and the other is for large bulbed onions for cooking purposes. If your goal is scallions then literally just buy some white onion sets and be done with it. But if your goal is to grow large bulbed onions not only do you need to go with a named variety as plants but an intermediate day length named cultivar. Short day and long day varieties just don't do as well in Kansas as do intermediate day cultivars. There are three good cultivars to consider. Candy is a sweet yellow, Red Candy Apple is a sweet red and Super Star is a sweet white. I was checking online and you can still find plenty of these available for immediate shipping at reasonable prices. Remember that onions will do best with a good side dressing of fertilizer after 3 weeks. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.