

Gardening with Chuck Programs for May 11 - 17, 2020

After the Storm

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. One of the hardest things for a gardener to do is nothing. Which is exactly what most gardeners should do immediately after strong thunderstorms move through. All you should be doing is clearing off any branches that fell on gardens or flower beds. Yes, plants may look pretty sad due to wind, hail or heavy rain. But just leave them alone. For a day or two after a big rain, plants are often very brittle because of all the moisture they've taken up. It causes skin splits on tomatoes and can make stems very brittle. Don't immediately rip out plants and buy new ones because they look like a stub. Give them a little time and usually new shoots will come along and catch right back up in very short order. Mother Nature has been doing this plant thing way longer than people so the best approach is often hands off! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Straw Bale Gardening

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. A few years ago the concept of straw bale gardening began to gain some traction because you can get a couple of bales, put them on your patio or somewhere in your backyard and grow some vegetable in them without having to tear up part of your lawn. The problem is that some people tried doing just that and had horrible success. There's not a problem with straw bale gardening other than you've really got to watch the watering of it in hot dry Kansas summer weather, it's that you have to get the bales conditioned and this is a process that will take at least ten days and probably a little more. It isn't as simple as buy a bale today and plant it tomorrow. I have excellent step by step instructions but it takes more time than I have on these programs to describe it. Give me a call or message me and I'll send them to you. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Powdery Mildew of Roses

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Many times people buy roses and because they may be labeled disease resistant so people think that they are resistant to ALL diseases. Unfortunately I have yet to find any plant species resistant to ALL diseases. Blackspot is a common disease of roses. Knockout and Drift roses are often touted as resistant to blackspot and they usually do a pretty good job. But just about any rose can get hammered by powdery mildew and we've been having great powdery mildew weather in recent weeks. Powdery mildew looks like it sounds and tends to dry out the leaves so they turn brown and crispy. Warmer and drier weather usually takes care of powdery mildew, although last year it did seem to go on forever. Fortunately just about every fungicide out there that is labeled for roses will control powdery mildew. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Sweet Corn Isn't for Small Gardens

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Right after tomatoes, sweet corn may be the most popular vegetable. Unlike tomatoes, sweet corn is not well adapted to small gardens. Sweet corn sheds pollen from the tassels and depends on wind to carry it to the silks. Each kernel of corn on an ear has to have its corresponding silk pollinated. That means you need multiple rows, probably at least 4 to 6 with rows at least 50 feet long. What it amounts to is that you need a lot of pollen being shed at the same time to make sure you have good kernel set for full ears. One row 20 feet long in a home garden is going to be a disappointment as you'll wind up with ears that have very few kernels. If you have a lot of space and access to a tractor and planter, it's easy to do. Otherwise, this is one garden crop you're better off to just buy at the store! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Asian Giant Hornets

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Asian Giant Hornets. Whoever thought that this was a great topic to throw all across the national news needs to be... well anyway. Will you all just stop with the killer hornet, murder hornet, whatever posts on social media. First of all, they aren't swarming all over the US. There was one colony found and destroyed in British Columbia. There have been a few individual hornets found nearby in Washington State. That's it! New stories have blown this so far out of proportion it isn't even funny. Yes, bee stings can be fatal. In the past 20 years an average of 62 people in the US die from bee and hornet stings annually including the very common honeybee. You've got a lot more things to worry about than Giant Asian Hornets. Personally, I'm far more concerned about the yellowjackets I encounter every fall! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.