

Side-dressing

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Home gardens can literally be a hodge podge of soil fertility. A few gardeners way over fertilize their gardens, a few get it about right and most actually under fertilize their gardens. They may put a good general fertilizer down at planting time and never fertilize the garden again. In the absence of a recent soil test we generally recommend a fertilizer application 3 to 4 four weeks into the growing season and that is 3 to 4 weeks after seeded crops emerge for transplants that's 3 to 4 weeks after transplanting. This is known as side dressing because we literally are just applying a nitrogen fertilizer alongside the row. Some good nitrogen only fertilizers to use for side dressing include ammonium sulfate, nitrate of soda, and calcium nitrate. The last one, calcium nitrate is my preference for tomato fertilization. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Peach Leaf Curl

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. If you have peach trees, you probably don't have peaches this year - if you have any tree fruit this year, count your blessings. But peach leaves are soon going to be showing peach leaf curl. Peach leaf curl is a fungal disease that causes peach leaves to get all puckered up, turn red and yellow and eventually fall off. If you see this don't waste time trying to do anything because it is way too late. The leaves were infected just as buds swelled and opened up weeks ago. Fungicides to control peach leaf curl are very effective but have to be applied in February before buds are swelling. Peach leaf curl won't kill a tree outright but over time it will weaken the tree and hurt fruit production in the years that you do have fruit. So take note of infection and then plan to get fungicides applied next February. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Bagworms

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I've had a lot of questions about bagworms this month which is good because homeowners do need to be concerned about them. With the cool weather we had been having this slowed down any early bagworm hatch. We've just over the past few days accumulated enough heat units that bagworms are starting to hatch. They will continue to hatch over the next couple of weeks. Even if you wanted to start a weekly application treatment regimen it's too early. I really think two more weeks would be a good time to start treating. If you want to do a two treatment approach I'd hold off until about June 10th and then treat again two weeks later. If you want to risk a single treatment approach I would wait until June 15th to 20th. BUT, whatever approach you use, keep monitoring post treatment for activity. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Hilling Potatoes

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. If you got potatoes planted they should be growing pretty good right now. The most important thing you need to do with your potatoes, beyond fertilizing, is hilling them up as they grow. Potatoes aren't roots, they are tubers and they develop off of roots that grow from the belowground stem that is ABOVE the piece of seed potato. So you first of all want to plant your potatoes 2 to 4 inches deep and then as they grow, hill them up. You can do it a couple of times. Don't completely cover the plants but keep pulling soil up from the middle of the row to mound around the plants. The more of the stem you can cover with soil the more space you will have to possibly produce potatoes. And just before you hill up your potatoes go ahead and side dress them so when you hill it up you cover the fertilizer with soil. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Watch Planting Trees in Wet Conditions

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. It's cold it's warm, it's wet, it's dry. That's typical Kansas weather. Unfortunately Mother Nature's plans may not always coincide with our desired days off or work schedules. What homeowners really want to avoid is working in wet soil especially when you are planting a tree. When wet soil is handled or manipulated, it compresses. When it compresses it gets denser so when it finally dries out you've essentially got a brick. It takes a long time to get that brick broken back down. If you dig a hole in soil that is too wet you tend to smear and compress the sides of the planting hole. When they dry out they become dense and it creates a barrier that is very hard for roots to penetrate. So they grow in a circle instead of growing out. If you dig up a spade of dirt squeeze it and it doesn't fall apart, it's too wet. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.