

Gardening with Chuck Programs for November 30 - December 6, 2020

Dormant Seeding of Turfgrass

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. At times it seems that construction and work around our homes, or just the timing to get things done, winds up with grass needing to be seeded at anything BUT the ideal time of the year. That's where the old saying that cool season grasses can be planted any month that has a letter R in it helps. This amounts to September through April and it's pretty accurate. From November through mid March we do what is known as dormant seeding. We are putting seed into the ground into cold soil where germination either won't happen or happens so slow that the grass won't really come up until March. You may want to increase seeding rates a little but be sure to apply with some starter fertilizer and be sure you get the seed INTO the ground. Only sow it on the surface if there's 1 or 2 inches of snow. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Shrub with Red Berries

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. It seems like this fall especially I'm seeing a lot of shrubs around the area covered in small little bright red berries. While it may look attractive it's actually become a troublesome weed and needs to be removed. This is one of a couple of species that we lump together and call bush honeysuckle. It isn't native but well adapted to our area. The shrub is primarily spread by birds eating the berries and depositing the seeds. It is invasive in pastures and especially woodlands where it crowds out seedlings of native desirable species. Right now is a good time to start removing it. You can grub out the root ball but that's a lot of work. I prefer to cut it off at ground level and treat the freshly cut stump with concentrated glyphosate. Make sure that the product is 20 to 50% glyphosate on the label and apply undiluted. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Correcting Poor Garden Drainage

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Many of us wind up putting our gardens where we can get full sunshine and away from trees. Unfortunately this sometimes means we put it where surface drainage may not be the best and you wind up with a low spot that collects water in rainy periods which is only good if you are growing rice. Fall is a good time to work on this as most crops are out of the ground and the soil is drier than it will be in the spring. Bring in good topsoil to these low areas and till it in with lots of organic matter to raise the level in the low areas. Once you got these materials hauled in and tilled up, level it the best you can with a rake. Be patient as it may take applications over several consecutive years to get the problem alleviated as you slowly reduce the low spots and keep the excess surface water outside of your garden area. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Box Elder Bugs, Ladybugs and Others

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. This hasn't been as bad a fall as normal for box elder bugs, a.k.a. Democrats, ladybugs or other insects in our homes. A recent warm spell I did see a few ladybugs flying around inside my house and on the sunny south side but not as many as normal. Treatments with pyrethroid insecticides around the foundation and up a ways on the side of your house can help reduce how many get inside. Of course caulking and sealing up small holes and gaps in foundations and where utilities enter your house can help. In non living areas like basements, attics, garages and enclosed porches you can also hang no-pest strips which are not fly paper but are a slow-release vapor that is very effective at knocking down all manner of flying and crawling insects. These strips are effective but need to be used according to label directions. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Christmas Presents for Gardeners

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. If you have an avid gardener on your Christmas shopping list you likely understand the challenge that it can be to buy for them. Given the outlook that we are going to be in this pandemic for a while, equate that to read, continuing to spend a lot of time at home, consider some books about gardening or even a magazine subscription. While I enjoy reading, I find that I don't do a lot of it. But this past 8 months have changed that! There are many magazines, some of them very specialized for various types of gardening. Let me know what your gardener likes to do and I can give you a couple of suggestions. Same thing with books. I read a very good book on garlic this fall. Just like with magazines there's a lot of good books out there and some not so good. If you need some Santa help, give me a call! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.