

Gardening with Chuck Programs for October 26 - November 1, 2020

Put Tools Away Clean

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. My father was a farmer and my mother was a gardener. One thing I learned at a very young age was that when ANY garden tool was put away it was put away ready to use the next time. Shovels and hoes were always cleaned up. If I noticed that a shovel or hoe wasn't cutting well I was taught very young how to sharpen it up or touch up the edge with a file. As we head into the off season for many gardeners it's a good time to get tools cleaned up and put away ready for spring. Clean all metal parts and apply a light film of oil - don't use WD-40 or similar items as they tend to be non-residual. Anything that has a cutting edge like shovel, hoe or pruning shears should have the edge touched up with a file. Lastly, check wooden handles for nicks, smooth them up with sandpaper and apply a coat of finish. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Choosing Trees for Fall Color

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Many homeowners drive around at this time of year and see trees and shrubs with bright yellow, orange or red leaves and then decide that they want one like that for their yard. They buy one and plant it without knowing if it's a good tree for that location in their yard - what I like to call, backwards plant selection. If you want to plant a new tree first understand your location and whether it's sunny or shady, hot and windy or sheltered from the summer winds. How much height and width do you have to fill. Then check on your soil type and even soil depth as some local areas can have shallow clay soils and then rocks. Once you have all of these characteristics figured out it is safe to start talking to myself or a nurseryman to find a tree, with the fall color you'd prefer to have, that will survive in your yard. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Keep Planting Spring Flowering Bulbs

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. As long as the ground isn't frozen hard as a rock or muddy you can still be planting spring flowering bulbs of all kinds including tulips, daffodils, crocus and a host of others. In fact, late in the season, and late is a relative term, like now, you can often find some pretty good deals as stores are trying to clear out the gardening inventory as they bring in holiday decorations. With the savings it doesn't matter if some of the bulbs may look a little weathered, if a few don't grow you aren't out much. It's still crucial to get them planted at the proper depth - shallow planting is the biggest hindrance to a long lived attractive display. Mix a little bonemeal in the bottom of the planting hole, backfill and tamp but don't pack. Toss a little bulb food fertilizer over the top and if the soil seems dry, water the bulbs in. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Put Your Mower Away Ready To Go

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. A couple of days ago I talked about putting your gardening tools away cleaned and ready to go. Well the same thing goes for all your equipment that has a gas motor on it like your lawnmower. Once you are through with it, clean it up. Blow all the dirt and grass and junk off of it. Change the oil and put on a new air filter and sparkplug. Clean all that nasty gunk off from under the mower deck and get the mower blades sharpened up. If you aren't comfortable doing this, take it to a small engine repair shop. Fuels now days are far more stable but it may not hurt to empty the gas tank or at least add a fuel stabilizer. If you empty the tank, start the engine and run all the fuel out of the carburetor as well. Then the last thing you may want to do is to pull the spark plug and put a shot of oil in the cylinder. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Caring for Winter Houseplants

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Many gardeners have been busy in recent weeks hauling plants inside to get through the winter. Yes, I bring a few in as well! Hopefully you cleaned them up and made sure you didn't bring any insect pests in with you. Many gardeners essentially do all the wrong things with their indoor/outdoor plants when they bring them in. You need to remember that you are moving these plants from high light environments to low light environments. Your goal through the winter is to just keep them alive. Don't overly fertilize them as in maybe give them 1/4 a normal fertilizer rate once. Excessive fertilization may stimulate them to grow under an environment where they don't have the light to respond. The second mistake that is made is watering by the calendar. Water when the soil is dry not by the day of the week! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.