

Gardening with Chuck Programs for December 20 - 26, 2021

Get Those Evergreens Watered

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I walked by my blue spruces recently and was shocked by how many needles were on the ground. Some of those branches may be lost. You see when it's dry like it's been, evergreens steal water from their own tissue if they don't have soil moisture to draw on. I spent the next week running the garden hose every day, and unhooking it at night so I didn't freeze and break pipes. I slowly worked my way around both trees soaking the area under the branches and a little ways out beyond the branch tips, or what we call the drip line. Just a slow running hose to soak up that soil down a foot or so is what's needed. If you have spruces, pines or even cedars and arborvitae, take any nice days and run a hose nice and slow to restore that soil moisture. Repeat monthly until we have precipitation but unhook your hose each night! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Old Garden Seed

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I'm a gardener too, so I know how it goes. You plant a couple rows of something in the garden and then stash the seeds in case you want to plant more. Then, often about this time of year you are cleaning up the porch, garage, shop or basement and hither and thither you find packages of seeds. Most all packages now days will tell you what year they were packed for. I also know that most gardeners squirrel things away. Garden seeds aren't one to squirrel away. Some seeds, in proper storage, will stay good for 2 or 3 years. But most of the time we aren't keeping them in proper storage conditions. When you find old packages of seeds, right down the variety, especially if you liked how it did this past year, and then throw all that seed away. You aren't going to save enough money keeping the seed to justify it! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Fruit Baskets

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I always joke that the biggest challenge for the holidays is what to do with the fruits and nuts, and I'm not talking about family members. Holiday fruit baskets are a popular gift. In some cases the fruit is gone in short order, but proper storage will stretch out how long it'll stay good. Unpack and separate the fruits. Tree fruits like apples, pears, grapefruit and oranges will store best at around 40 degrees either in the refrigerator or an attached unheated garage. Tropical fruits, except for those citrus fruits, and this includes bananas, need to be stored at room temperature and used fairly soon after receiving as they simply are more perishable with shorter storage life. The tree fruits and citrus fruits can usually be expected to store 3 to 4 weeks at that 40 degree range, without shriveling or losing crispness. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Gifts of Nuts

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Yesterday it was holiday fruits, today it is holiday nuts! We often think of nuts as being long storage life produce but you need to remember that they are high in oils and oils can go rancid. If you've never bit into a nut that's gone rancid, you're lucky! While it's handy to have a nut bowl out where you have easy access, you're better off to keep the nuts in the refrigerator or freezer, either shelled or unshelled to reduce water loss. The more water that the nuts loses the more quickly they will go rancid. You can store them shelled or unshelled but shelled will take up less space. Put them in a plastic container with a tight fitting lid or a resealable plastic bag. This will keep them from absorbing flavors from other foods. While they will store in the freezer for up to a year, quality is best if they are used in six months. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Have A Very Merry Christmas

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Christmas is almost upon us. I used to be a Scrooge but those days are long gone. For me, Christmas is a time of gathering, reflecting, and resetting. It isn't about the presents to me, it's about a state of mind, one of peace, caring and fellowship. It's about accepting others for what they are, regardless and finding commonality. Once the commonalities are found we can go a long ways. In recent years it seems like too many people are focusing, sometimes angrily, on the differences. If you don't agree with me, you are wrong and we can't be friends. My wish for you over the next few days is for you to find peace and contentment, acceptance and friendship. I know it's sometimes easier to carry a grudge than to dive into that unknown realm of acceptance, but give it a try and have a very merry Christmas. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.