

Gardening with Chuck Programs for February 8 - 14, 2021

Treatment Time for Peach Leaf Curl

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. If you have a peach tree in your home orchard, you will have at least some peach leaf curl every year. Peach leaf curl is a leaf disease that infects the leaves just as they open and then weeks later causes them to distort and pucker, turn reddish yellow and then fall off. It isn't fatal to the tree as it can grow new leaves, but the loss of leaf area can reduce the number of peaches and the size of peaches that the tree produces that year. Once the leaf starts to show the characteristic distortion it's too late to treat. You need to treat your peach trees now with a fruit tree fungicide that contains chlorothalonil. The disease is lying dormant on the small branches of the tree waiting to infect the buds when they open. Spray on a day when the temperature is above 40 being sure to thoroughly cover all the branches. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Fruit Tree Pruning Season

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We are rapidly approaching mid February which is what I consider to be the start of the fruit tree pruning season. Basically anytime from now until the trees start blooming is a good time to prune them. Sap is already flowing in many tree species and buds are going to start swelling before long. The more the buds swell the easier it becomes to knock them off while you are pruning. Now, from a tree health perspective you can you can literally prune almost any time of the year. But pruning in the late winter minimizes the amount of sap bleeding that occurs. If done early enough it also reduces risk of knocking off swelling buds that contain flowers. Use sharp pruning shears and saws, disinfect them between trees but you don't need to treat the cuts with anything. But make sure the temperature is above freezing! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Creeping Green Death

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. When planting new trees of any kind or size we need to be extra careful of what my forester friends and I call, "The Creeping Green Death". While this sounds like some horrible disease, it is actually nothing more than grass, and specifically any turfgrass or brome grass. Most grasses slowly spread through rhizomes or stolons and if left unchecked they will crawl right up around a tree. The problem is that grasses are very effective competitors for water and nutrients. Their roots are right under the soil surface so they intercept water and nutrients first. To keep young trees healthy and competitive we have to keep grasses, and weeds, away from the base of the tree and I mean a vegetation free circle around the tree that is 4 to 10 feet across. Do this with mulch or herbicide just keep it plant free! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

AAS Squash Goldilocks

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I haven't shared any of the 2021 All America plant selections for a couple of weeks so let's close out this second week of February with a couple. Today it is a winter squash of the acorn type called Goldilocks. As you can guess from its name it is not a green acorn squash. It's not really yellow or gold but more of a bright pumpkin orange. It is described as being very vigorous with high yield and disease tolerance. Acorn squash also tend to be more resistant to squash bugs than summer squash. It's flavor is described as being rich and nutty. It has very uniform fruit shape size and color. That bright orange color also makes the fruit highly desirable to use as fall or Halloween decorations. Remember though that winter squash, like acorn or butternut, are best planted in the month of June for fall harvest. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

AAS Zinnia Profusion

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. One of the AAS floral winners this year is a zinnia called Profusion. I'll just warn you up front that this does not look like your mother or grandmothers zinnia. It's broad petals are bicolored with a bright red center ring that transitions to a bold yellow as you move to the end of the petal. What's really cool is as the flower ages, the yellow transforms to a salmon, mauve, apricot, dusty pink color. This variety is very prolific and produces a literal blanket of long lasting blossoms, a trait we refer to as floriferousness. Like all zinnas it is going to be easy to establish by direct seeding. It is a compact mounded plant so it should also do well in pots and containers. It is going to do best in full sun but can handle part shade. It does not require extensive deadheading to keep it blooming. This should be an easy grower! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.