

## Gardening with Chuck Programs for January 11 - 17, 2021

### Keep Soil in the Ground

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Dirt. Or you can call it soil if you wish. Whatever you call it, it is an amazing medium that we owe our very survival on this planet to. It's ability to capture and hold water, capture and hold nutrients and then provide a base for us to grow plants in is nothing short of miraculous. But here's the thing about dirt. For it to really be effective, it needs to stay in the ground, it does not belong in containers that we try to grow plants in. The minute you put garden soil, dirt if you will, into a container, even a good sized container, you run into problems. Problems of compaction, water logging, poor water infiltration. No, if you are growing anything in a container you really need to use some sort of soil-less potting medium. And the smaller the container, the more crucial that becomes as in starting veggies from seed! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Kansas Radon Action Month

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. January is Kansas Radon Action Month. Radon is an invisible odorless radioactive gas that is naturally occurring and can cause lung cancer. Some parts of the country have low levels of it and others have high levels of it. It comes out of the ground and can be found in homes, especially basements. Unlike carbon monoxide that can kill in minutes, the threat from radon is long term exposure, as in decades worth of 8 hours a day exposure. The only way to know if you have it is to test your home. The test is simple and not expensive. The test kits cost \$5.50 and you can buy them at the Extension Office. That cost includes analysis. The report comes right back to you. If you spend considerable time in your basement or an earth bermed home, you really need to test. Stop by and pick up a test today! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Edible Alliums

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Alliums, as a plant group, are amazing. Some are grown for their awesome flowers. While those are cool and fun to grow, I personally am far more fascinated with the edible alliums. You know them and probably know them well. These are plants like onions, chives and garlic and lesser known or at least lesser utilized plants like shallots and leeks (by the way, elephant garlic isn't garlic at all, but a type of leek). Not only are all of these awesome plants to use in cooking, but we can grow them all in Kansas, and grow them fairly well. I really started getting interested in the edible alliums about a decade ago and the more I've learned the more fascinated I have become with them and plan to spend a little more time in the months ahead to help you better understand this amazing group of plants. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Onions - Scallions

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. While not everyone are fans of onions, they are without a doubt that best known member of the allium family. When a gardener buys onions they can get seeds, which are a hard and long process to get going, or onion plants or onion sets. Sets are the dry little bulblets we see in stores in the spring. If you go to buy some you'll find three types, white, yellow or red. You will have no idea what kind of onion it is, what the variety is, it's just an onion. While onion sets can be allowed to grow to mature large bulbed onions, they are best planted to be used as green onions or scallions. Onion sets, and onion plants, can both be planted the last 7 to 10 days of March. Since the onion sets are going to be harvested as green onions, space them just a couple inches apart as you won't need room for mature bulbs. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Onions - Big Bulbed

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. If you want to grow mature onions or large bulb onions that are commonly used for cooking or to make onion rings you are best off to plant onion plants. One of the main reasons is because you can purchase named varieties. You want named varieties so you get the right maturity group for our area.

There are short, intermediate and long day varieties and it all has to do with the amount of daylight the area receives which determines initiation of bulbing which also dictates potential size of the bulb. While both intermediate and long day varieties will grow acceptably in Kansas we generally recommend intermediate day length varieties. Plant them in late March and fertilize them heavily and early. Some good cultivars to try would include Super Star, a white, Candy, a yellow or Red Candy Apple, a red. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.