

Gardening with Chuck Programs for January 18 - 24, 2021

Select Your Location, THEN Your Tree

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Before too much longer many homeowners will be thinking about springtime and maybe planting some new trees. They will look at catalogs or online and find a tree they really like and order it...without ever checking to see if it is well suited to where they want to plant it. We tend to just think that because we see trees growing all around us that they can grow just about anywhere. Trees, like people, have many different preferences. What's the soil like, clay, loam or sand? Is it a wet or dry location? Does it get a lot of southwest summer blast furnace winds or does it get a lot of winter cold. We need to remember that trees need to do more than survive, they need to thrive. Take an inventory of conditions where you want to plant a tree or trees and then we can start selecting the trees that will work there! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Caddo Sugar Maples

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. A lot of people want trees that give them what our native trees don't, bright autumn colors meaning reds and oranges. I guess they aren't happy with the yellows of cottonwoods, ash and hackberry. So a lot of people flock to red maples which are a really bad choice for Kansas climates. Sugar maples may work better but they are prone to a lot of summer scorching and leaf tatter. But there is a sugar maple native to the hot dry climate of southwestern Oklahoma. The Caddo Sugar Maple, from Caddo County Oklahoma, is a very good tree for most all of Kansas. These trees have good scorch resistance and show good red fall color. Now don't go to the nursery and ask for a Caddo Maple. You'll need to ask for one of the selections such as Autumn Splendor, John Pair or Flashfire. John Pair is more compact. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Poison Ivy

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Poison ivy is an amazing plant that can make a human's life miserable but apparently doesn't impact any other species! The nasty compound urushiol is an oil that's in the sap and present in the plant at any time of the year. But right now, while it doesn't have leaves, can be a great time to get vines removed and the roots killed. Don't use a chainsaw as the oil laden chips and sawdust can get thrown all over the place. Using lopping shears or a handsaw carefully cut off the vine at ground level and remove enough of a piece that you can apply concentrated glyphosate, or roundup immediately on the cut stump. Avoid using other products especially for vines growing around desirable trees or shrubs. Other products run the risk of being absorbed through the bark or roots of the desirable plants causing damage. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Poison Ivy vs Virginia Creeper

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. One of the challenges with controlling poison ivy or avoiding it even, comes with not knowing what it looks like. This time of year can be a real challenge because it has no leaves! Complicating the issue is its propensity to grow in the same areas as another native vine, Virginia creeper. Fortunately it's fairly easy to differentiate between the two. Virtually all vines have what are known as aerial roots. That's what helps them hold on to whatever they are climbing. Poison ivy has lots of tiny little hair like aerial roots. I've heard it sometimes referred to as a hairy rope! The aerial roots on Virginia creeper are significantly larger and there tends to be fewer of them. The aerial roots on Virginia Creeper tend to be about the size of a pencil lead. Fuzzy or hairy rope with many small aerial roots, that's your poison ivy! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

All America Selections

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Every sport has it's All Americans, but so do plants! Companies send in new vegetable and flower selections to the all America organization who then sends them all over the country to be planted in test gardens in a host of different climates. The plants are evaluated through the growing season, and in the case of vegetables they are also evaluated at the dinner table, and those that make the grade are awarded the AAS or all America selection winner. Over the next couple of weeks I'll be highlighting some of these flowers and vegetables. Many well known mail order nurseries will carry these AAS winners but you may have to order early as seed is often in limited supply the first few years. You can go online for a sneak preview of these at all-americanselections.org or just enter that phrase in a search engine. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.