

### Watering Fruit Trees

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. The next six to eight weeks are crucial for fruit trees. If your fruit trees have later season fruit on them then they are growing rapidly in size and you don't want the tree to run out of soil moisture. Regardless of if there is or was fruit, now is the time that many fruit species are making flower buds to bloom next spring. Again, a good reason to avoid stress on the tree. In the absence of about an inch of rain a week a good soaking every couple weeks is in order. You can use an open hose running a slow trickle, which is about the size of a pencil but my preferred method is to get a 25 or 50 foot black soaker hose and coil it around a tree starting about halfway from the trunk to the drip line and then make coils about a foot apart and go out even slightly beyond the drip line of the tree. Then let it run for several hours! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Cracking Tomatoes

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. After you've babied those tomato plants along and are waiting for that first tomato of the season, few things are more frustrating than going out to pick it only to find that it has developed cracks. Cracks in tomatoes are generally caused by pressure inside the fruit that is more than the skin can handle. One of the common causes, but not the only one, is getting a big rain after it's been dry. The plant takes up so much water so fast that the tomato is growing faster than it's skin and boom, you have a blowout. Using mulch and watering regularly, not letting the soil get bone dry is one way to avoid this. Older big slicer style tomatoes tend to be worse at this. Smaller slicers and paste type tomatoes seem to have less problems. Jet Star has been one of the most crack resistant varieties we have. There are several other's with good crack resistance but just good soil water management is your best defense. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Green June Beetles

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I pulled into the driveway on a recent Saturday and commented to Jaye that we hadn't seen any green June beetles yet. The next day by late morning they were flying around everywhere! Green June beetles are large beetles with velvety green and brown markings on their back. They are nearly an inch long and fly regularly although not all that well. In fact many people often think they are some form of bee because they do make a buzzing sound when they fly. But most bees don't fly into the side of buildings, cars or people! While harmless to people, these rascals love ripening fruit. They have a nobby horn on their head that they used to gouge into fruit and then they start eating and can ruin fruit in a hurry or even ripening sweet corn. Spray with carbaryl or malathion every 4 to 7 days to keep them away from fruit trees with ripening fruit. Be sure to follow label directions for mixing rates and days to wait until harvesting! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Japanese Beetle Traps

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. If you go into many stores with a lawn and garden section you can likely find a good supply of Japanese beetle traps. Remember that Japanese beetles are the small, half inch long, beetles with coppery brown wing covers that feed on leaves, not the green June beetle that goes after fruit. These Japanese beetle traps use a scent lure that attracts them to a plastic funnel that then directs them into a container that they can't get out of. We do not recommend using these traps. The scent lure use both floral food scents and sex pheromones. The lures work. In fact they work very well. The problem is that they are likely to attract far more Japanese beetles to your yard than end up in the trap itself. You have artificially increased the population of Japanese beetles in your yard causing more feeding damage. Your better to use synthetic pyrethroid insecticides or the soapy water in a bucket and paint brush method! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## How To Pick A Ripe Melon

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Oh lordy, all the garbage and nonsense I've seen on the internet on how to pick out a good melon just makes me scream. First of all there are not male and female fruit. They contain seed they are all females - basic physiology people. With muskmelon look if there is still a stem attached. When muskmelon are ripe, the stem totally detaches leaving a clean dish shaped scar. They should also have a pleasing musky aroma when ripe and at room temperature. With watermelons check the ground spot - it should be a creamy yellow. Check the base of the fruit as it should develop a surface roughness called sugar bumps when ripe. If still in the garden, look for the tendril that attaches at the same point as the melon. When it dies and turns brown, that melon is ripe. As for honeydew melons, yeah, you're on your own, they are tough. But most will start to get soft on the blossom end of the fruit when ripe. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.