

## Gardening with Chuck Programs for March 1 - 7, 2021

### Yes, Start Pruning Fruit Trees

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. While you can start pruning fruit trees anytime it's above freezing in the winter, I normally feel that March 1 is the start of the fruit tree pruning season. We want to try to get trees pruned before the buds start swelling too much, not because we can damage the tree by cutting later, but as the buds swell they become brittle and break off easily. But for now, they are just starting to swell and it's a good time to get cutting. Don't worry if there's some sap flowing out of those pruning cuts. The tree will seal those over fairly quickly. You don't need to, in fact you don't want to, spray anything on those cuts. If you need some information or have some questions on fruit tree pruning give me a call, stop by the office for our new updated bulletins or make an appointment and I'll stop by for a quick lesson! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Spraying Apple Trees

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. If you have apple trees you probably know that there are several things that can go wrong with them from both insect and disease pests. Many people feel that they need to apply a dormant season spray to apple trees but unless you know that you have scale insects, then dormant sprays are a waste of time on apples. Your first treatment is likely going to be needed just after most of the petals fall and that is to control cedar apple rust on susceptible trees. At about the same time you will want to start spraying for insect pests, generally codling moth that can attack the small fruit, although in recent years I've also had bagworms feeding on my small apples. It's probably best to use a fruit tree spray that is a combination insecticide/fungicide to take care of both. Continue spraying every two weeks into the summer. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Spraying Stone Fruit Trees

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Stone fruit trees, which is basically any fruit with a pit like cherry, peach, plum or apricot, are quite different from apple trees. Peach trees and plum trees need to have a dormant fungicide application to control peach leaf curl and black knot. If you haven't already done this, get it done soon. After the blossoms have fallen you'll want to start using one of the fruit tree combo sprays to control various leaf diseases or fruit diseases. We don't get as many insect pests in stone fruits as we do in apple trees, but there are one or two. Now, this year it may be a bit different. If we don't have any fruit then you don't need to spray unless you have a cherry tree that has had issues with cherry leaf spot in the past. Other than that, no fruit no spray. But if you have fruit, stay on a two week spray schedule until harvest. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Don't Prune Spring Flowering Shrubs Yet

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. After that brutal cold there may very well be some bottled up spring fever. On top of that, daylight savings time is going to be starting in about 10 days. So homeowners are going to be craving to be outside, they're going to have more evening hours, and probably warmer evening hours to be out in the yard. Okay, put down the pruning shears and step away from the shrubbery! These are the kinds of conditions that cause homeowners to start pruning lilacs, forsythia, spirea and many other spring flowering shrubs. In their eagerness to do something outside, they manage to prune off all those flower buds that those shrubs formed late last summer and then they are frustrated when they have no blooms or very few blooms. Remember, we prune spring flowering shrubs just AFTER they bloom in the spring. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Prune Shade Trees for Problem Prevention

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We prune fruit trees and shade trees for two very different purposes. We prune fruit trees to control form, encourage good fruit production and to control size of the tree. Also remember that many fruit trees have a life span of 40 years or less, often much less. We do not prune shade trees to control size. We select the right tree for the location so we aren't dealing with an oversized tree. We do prune shade trees to remove poorly attached limbs before they get big and become a problem. We do prune shade trees to slowly lift the bottom branches up so we can mow under them more easily. Selecting the right tree and planting in the right place avoids many problems like limbs brushing against buildings or getting in power lines. Shade tree can last 100 years or more, IF we start with the right tree. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.