

Gardening with Chuck Programs for March 29 - April 4, 2021

The First Mowing

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Some homeowners can't wait for that first mowing of the yard. I always hope that I can push that first mowing as far into April as possible! Many homeowners want to see instant green in their yards in the spring so may set their mowers quite low to try to get rid of a lot of that old dead grass. While I can understand this desire, you have to be careful not to mow the grass too low. I encourage homeowners, if they want to do this, to only drop the mower deck $\frac{1}{2}$ inch below their normal mowing height, then immediately reset to full height of 3 to $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Mowing your cool season lawn too low can expose the crowns of the plants to temperature extremes causing damage. It can also expose bare soil in your yard. Bare soil allows sunlight to the soil surface and can often bring a host of weeds! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Early April Vegetable Garden Planting

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. As we move out of March and into April the air starts to warm, the soil starts to warm and we start to get more and more vegetables that we can be planting in the garden. During April we can plant just about all of our root crops and most of our leafy crops. Beets and onions can be planted most all month long. Carrots most of the month and potatoes, radishes and turnips, and parsnips, for at least the first half of the month. The cole crops, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, even Brussel sprouts can or should be planted by mid April. Potatoes also should be in the ground by mid April but remember that the cole crops and potatoes can be planted again in July for fall harvest. Peas continue to be good to plant through about the 3rd week of April. Lettuce, collards, spinach and chard can go in up through about the end of April as well. Still too early for tomatoes and peppers as well as the vine crops! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Crabgrass Preventers

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We normally like to have our crabgrass preventers applied about mid April as crabgrass starts to germinate in early May. That gives us time to get the products activated with rain or irrigation. If you are using the newer products like Barricade or Dimension, also known as prodiamine and dithiopyr, you can apply those anytime now as they will give you true season long control. However, if you are using one of the older products like pendimethalin, also known as Halts, or Team, then you will likely need to make a second application in 6 to 8 weeks to get good full season control. Read the label of what you are using for specific instructions. If you get caught going on late with your preventer I'd recommend using Dimension as it will control small crabgrass seedlings. And of course, if you have overseeded or reseeded your lawn this spring, don't use anything to protect those young seedling turf grasses. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Strawberry Planting Time

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. While not a tree like most of our fruit plants, strawberries are probably one of our most reliable fruit producers in the state. While you won't get any strawberries this year late March through mid-April is the time to get your strawberry beds established. After working your soil, place plants 18 to 24 inches apart. These mother plants will grow vigorously in the cooler spring temperatures. It's important to get these plants well established as later in the spring and summer they will send out runners to make daughter plants and this is where you'll get the majority of your strawberry production next year. Once you have your strawberries planted consider applying a garden weed preventer to keep down weed competition and a couple weeks after planting apply one pound of 12-12-12 per 100 square feet of bed. Make sure you remove any flowers you see this first year so the energy is spent on making daughter plants! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Apple Tree Spraying

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. If you have apple trees it's just about time to start spraying. My trees are showing good floral bud development now. If your trees have been hit with rust in past years, get ready to start spraying just as soon as you start to see those new leaves come out. Use Immunox, F-Stop or Fungi-Max as a fungicide. Spray every 10 to 14 days. Once most of the petals have fallen you need to add an insecticide, there are several labeled, to start protecting the little apples, that hopefully will develop, from codling moth or even bagworms. If you don't have any apples on your tree you won't need the insecticide. Continue the rust control until June 1st when you can drop that immunox and switch to something containing captan to continue protection against apple scab IF your trees have been impacted in the past. Generally you will keep spraying every 2 weeks until about mid August. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.