

Gardening with Chuck Programs for November 15 - 21, 2021

Rabbit Protection

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Rabbits and rodents are abundant as we head into winter and they often are looking for food. The thin bark of young trees can be pretty darn tasty to these rascals and it sometimes pays to take some pre-emptive steps. For starters, never, ever pile mulch up on the base of a tree. Mulch should come up within an inch of the tree but back down to zero depth at the tree trunk. Think of a doughnut, not a volcano. Small rodents can get into that mulch and burrow around safely out of sight and just eat that bark off all the way around a young tree. To reduce rabbits eating on the bark you can use a 2 foot tall cylinder of 1 inch mesh chicken wire or even some of the spiral plastic wraps. Chicken wire can be left in place all year, as long as it doesn't start to grow into the bark. Remove the plastic wrap in the spring. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Drain Hoses

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We've finally had some freezing weather, for at least one day anyway, but that serves as a good reminder that it's time to start winterizing hoses and hydrants. Freeze proof hydrants are freeze proof, as long as there aren't hoses attached to them. Before we start freezing every night detach hoses. Many newer hoses will survive outside but they will last longer if they are drained and at least put out of the sunlight through the winter. Hoses can be drained by gravity or you can use an air compressor to force air through the hose and push all the water out. Black spongy soaker hoses usually drain out pretty well but go ahead and force drain with air if you are doing other hoses. Make sure that Ys, multiple hose manifolds and nozzles are removed and drained also as they can hold water, freeze and break! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Planting Nut Trees

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Many people were taught as children that trees have very deep roots. In reality most tree species have very wide ranging roots in the top couple feet of soil, but few, if any, deep roots. Most of our nut trees are the exception to this. They do develop closer to a true tap root as well as far ranging roots close to the surface. This creates a resilient tree, but also a tree that doesn't like to be moved, especially dug up and transplanted. If you want to plant an oak, a walnut, a pecan or hickory it's okay to transplant one that has been growing in a pot - it hasn't had the chance to develop much of a tap root. But if you find a 5 or 6 foot tree in the timber, trying to dig it up and move it usually doesn't end well. What you can do though is to collect acorns or nuts and plant those in the fall where you want a nut tree to be. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Peach Leaf Curl

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Peach leaf curl is an annual disease of peach leaves. The leaves are infected as they break dormancy in the spring by fungal spores that have wintered on the branches and bud scales of trees. Infected leaves turn yellow and red and get all thick and distorted before they fall off. It doesn't kill the tree, but it takes energy away from fruit production to grow new leaves. Fungicidal treatments must be applied before the leaves ever break dormancy. I've traditionally recommended spraying fungicide in late February but a recent newsletter from Ohio suggested doing it as soon as all the leaves are off this fall. So why not spray when all the leaves are off in the fall and then again in late February. Since we need good thorough coverage of all the branches two sprays spread a few months apart may work even better! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Mulching Roses

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. While many roses plants can make it through most winters with nominal winter kill, some roses, hybrid tea roses especially, likely need to be mulched down to insure their survival. Six inches of soil brought in from outside the rose bed (to protect the shallow roots roses have) mounded over the crown of the plant is about all that it takes. Unfortunately, many rose growers do this annual maintenance way too soon. The goal of mulching is actually to help keep the plant dormant which means it needs to go dormant before you mulch. We just finally had a decent freeze late last week. The roses are just now starting to go dormant. I'd suggest waiting until after Thanksgiving and getting a few more freezes under our belts before we mulch. Normally I also don't like to prune roses until spring. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.