

Gardening with Chuck Programs for November 8 - 14, 2021

Natural Needle Drop of Pines

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. While we call pine trees evergreens, they don't keep their needles forever. Often, not every year, pines will shed the old needles. For a while this fall I didn't think that it was going to happen. But I guess like everything else right now, it's just running late. I did recently see some pines dropping a lot of old needles. Naturally, if you aren't familiar with this, it can be quite concerning to homeowners. In natural needle drop the oldest needles (furthest back on the branches) will turn yellow, often bright yellow, and then start to fall off. By the way, these needles can be left for mulch under the tree or raked up and used for mulch elsewhere in the yard. Remember, yellow needles falling off a pine tree are okay. When you want to get concerned is when there are brown needles on the tree that do not fall off. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Horseradish Processing

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. After a hard freeze in the late fall is when you need to process horseradish. Large sized roots are dug for processing. Smaller pencil sized roots are replanted for future crops or to give away to others. Once the roots are washed and peeled, cut them into sections small enough to go into a blender or food processor along with a small amount of water and a couple of ice cubes. After running the processor to the desired fineness, vinegar or lemon juice is added to stop the process that makes horseradish strong. The sooner you add it the milder the horseradish will be. Use 2 to 3 T of vinegar per cup of horseradish sauce along with $\frac{1}{2}$ t of salt. Since the kick of horseradish is odor based it is advisable that you do this outside with a little bit of breeze and when you open the lid keep your face turned away. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Woolly Bears Do Not Predict the Weather

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I love folklore weather prediction tales and I love even more when I get to dash those tales. The Woolly Bear is one that seems to capture everyone's attention. But I'm here to tell you that the different sizes of brown and black color bands on a Woolly Bear have NOTHING to do with what the winter weather will be. The size of those bands are determined by the age of the caterpillar, food sources and how wet or dry it has been where the Woolly Bear has been living. And if you have a solid black Woolly Bear, it's not a Banded Woolly Bear but a Giant Leopard Moth caterpillar. As I've said over and over, the actions and appearance of creatures and the behavior of plants has nothing to do with what the future weather will be and everything to do with what the weather has already been in that location. Sorry. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Till the Garden Now for Early Spring Planting

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I have a now gone friend who loved to say that failing to plan was planning to fail. When it comes to your garden, especially your early season garden, this is very true. There are many early season vegetables we can plant in our garden including the likes of peas, lettuce, potatoes, cole crops, onions and turnips. Unfortunately too many gardeners don't think about planting these crops until it's time, in mid to late March. Unfortunately, at that time, the garden may still be too wet to till, in fact it may not dry off enough to safely till until mid April. You may not know that you want to plant some of these until we get to mid-March. So take the time now, to just plan ahead that you may want to plant them and get it tilled up. If it's tilled now, you'll find it's dry enough to plant, when mid-March rolls around! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Knotweed Control

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Knotweed, that's Knot with a K, is a weedy plant that we often have in compacted areas around the edge of yards, driveways or walking paths. When it first comes up it's soft and dark green, but as the year wears on it gets stiff and dry and becomes an ugly annoyance. Knotweed is one of our earliest germinating summer annuals, often germinating in February. You have two options to control it. The first is to wait until after it starts growing in late March or early April and spray it with one of the post emerge products like Trimec, Weed-Out or Weed-B-Gon. But there is a more proactive approach and that's to apply a weed preventer now with pendimethalin, surflan, barricade, dimension or XL. If you are planning to re-seed in the spring do not use one of these products now and treat in the spring. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.