

## Gardening with Chuck Programs for September 13 - 19, 2021

### Get That Grass Seed in the Ground!

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We are right smack in the middle of grass seed planting season. If you were going to plant grass this fall you need to get that seed in the ground now. And when I say in the ground, I literally mean in the ground, not scattered over the surface. I don't care how but that seed needs to be under the soil surface. You can use a power seeder or slit seeder. You can till up an area, scatter the seed and rake it in. It really doesn't matter as long as the seed is UNDER the soil surface. The soil is still warm so grass seed is going to sprout and start growing fairly quickly still which is important. You want to get that seedling well rooted so freezing and thawing weather doesn't heave it out of the ground. You also want to be very cautious with weed killers on newly seeded areas until the grass has been mowed at least twice. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Keep New Lawns Watered

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We headed into lawn seeding season with some pretty dry conditions. Then we had those wonderful rains right before Labor Day. With good soil moisture, newly seeded grass should be out of the ground in about 10 days, maybe a little less. But once that grass seed has started to germinate it becomes very important to keep it moist. If grass seed that has started to germinate dries out, it will die. It doesn't have the ability to go dormant until more water becomes available. You don't have to soak newly seeded lawn areas deeply. You are focusing on the top inch or two and it won't take very long to keep that area damp. As the grass starts to get some height you can adjust from daily watering to every other day, and then every few days and by the time you've mown it twice, it's likely well enough rooted to make it! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Rain = Mushrooms

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We went through about two months with below, well below, normal rainfall. Then we received 125% of our average September rainfall in the first few days of the month just ahead of Labor Day.

Excess rain and warm soils can only lead to one thing, a nice crop of mushrooms. Fairy rings are showing up around the area and individual mushrooms are showing up in lawns thanks to those wonderful rains. While unsightly, just remember, there's not a darn thing you can do about them except kick them over. The mushroom is the fruiting body of the fungus organism that is underground feeding on and decaying organic matter that's in the form of tree or grass roots. In the end it's a good thing as their action returns nutrients to the soil, hence the dark green grass around fairy rings. This too shall pass! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Fall Peony Care

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Peony season is over. Even IF your peonies still have some green leaves, it's okay to carefully cut them off at ground level and get the plants out of there. Sooner is better before all those disease riddled leaves start to go to pieces. If you need to divide or reset peonies, or plant new ones, now is the time to do that. Just remember we want to keep those eyes between 1 and 2 inches deep. Deeper than that and they won't bloom. If you aren't resetting your peonies, take a garden rake and carefully rake off any soil that may have mounded up over the crowns in recent years. Lastly give them a light fertilization this fall and then do it again next spring when new growth starts. Carefully apply the fertilizer sort of in a doughnut pattern around the edge of the crown. Fertilizer on the crown can burn the plant! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Don't Just Walk Away

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Some of us die hard gardeners are tending to fall gardening crops as well as the last few weeks of tomatoes and those silly pumpkins that are taking over everything!!! But many other gardeners don't want to see one more zucchini or tomato or anything. They've had enough! If you are in that camp and are through for the year, I don't want you to just walk away. It's an easy thing to do and somewhat understandable. But doing so can put you behind the curve come next spring. First of all I want you to pull up all your tomato plants and toss in the burn pile or the trash, not the compost pile, too many diseases! Everything else can be pretty well mowed off to tidy it up a little bit but then later into the fall I want you to till that garden up. Burying that residue reduces insect and disease problems next year! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.