

Gardening with Chuck Programs for April 11 - 17, 2022

Purple Flowers

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Unless you were out in your lawn paying close attention starting about a month ago, you may be at a loss to understand why all of a sudden you have an abundance of pretty little purple flowers. Those purple flowers are henbit. They started growing last fall, and the best time to control them is in very late October and early November. Treatments applied earlier than that would be ineffective as they plants weren't up yet. You can treat those weeds now, but even if you don't, the plants will be dead by late June. Even if you do treat them now, once you see purple color in the bloom, there's a good chance that they will still create viable seed by the time the herbicide kills them. So either way you look at it, you'll still need to treat late next fall. For treatments now, apply as directed by the label on your product! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Get Cool Season Crops Planted

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We are rapidly screaming up on the middle of April. Even in spite of the roller coaster thermometer readings, it is warming up and the hot days of summer will be here soon. We have many garden vegetable crops that need the cooler weather of spring or fall to grow best and we are rapidly running out of time to get these in the ground. By April 15th you want to have all your cole crops planted as well as lettuce, potatoes, radishes and peas. Lettuce can actually be relay planted up through mid May. For onions, spinach and turnips you have until the end of the month. You can now also start planting beets, collards, swiss chard and carrots. Once we get to the very end of the month you can get sweet corn in the ground, but I mean the last few days of April. And once we hit early May, the flood gates are opened! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Fertilizing Fruit Trees

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. A lot of people plant fruit trees because they like fresh fruit. But after they plant it, that's about all they ever do. So today we'll talk about fertilizing fruit trees. The year I plant a tree I don't want to really do much with it but keep it watered, but don't drown it! The next two years you want to start fertilizing with about 1/4 cup per tree. We are normally looking at one of the high nitrogen fertilizers that we'd use for turfgrass as long as it has no herbicide in it. Then we increase to 1/2 cup for 3 and 4 year old trees, and up to 1 to 2 cups for trees five to ten years of age. You want to sprinkle this evenly around under the drip line of the tree. Your fruit trees will also grow better if you keep the area under the tree grass free. Grass is a fierce competitor with all trees for nutrients and water. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Planting Easter Lilies Outside

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Many people have Easter lilies in their homes during the Easter season. If you normally just toss them after they finish blooming you're missing the opportunity to plant them out in your flower bed.

Basically you wait until after the flowers have faded and all danger of frost is past (basically first of May). Continue to water and fertilize, but don't drown the poor thing, water by touch! Place the plant in light dappled shade - you can even sink the pot in the soil up to the brim. Continue to care for it until the foliage dies down. After the foliage dies down you can remove it and take the bulb out of the pot. Find a well drained spot, even working peat moss into the soil under the bulb. Plant it about 6" deep. Mulch heavily to conserve moisture. New growth may or may not show up in the fall but uncover in the spring. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Start the Mowing Season Right

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Many people can't wait until they can start mowing, in fact I've seen several lawns mowed already. I always strive to postpone that first mowing as long as possible! First of all, start the year with a sharp mower blade and then keep the blade sharp. Many manufacturers recommend sharpening the blade with every 10 to 20 hours of use. The grass blades will tell you when it's time! It's okay to drop the mowing height, a LITTLE for the very first mowing, but I recommend no more than one half inch and then take it right back up to the 3 to 3½ inch range for the rest of the summer. If you have a new lawn that you seed this spring. Start to mow it at that 3 to 3½ inch height as soon as it reaches that. Don't drop the mower just to mow it, those grass plants need that leaf area to produce food for growth! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.