

Gardening with Chuck Programs for April 25 - May 1, 2022

Gardening Vertical

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. In much of America land is readily available and we tend to think of gardening horizontal, along the lay of the land. But many garden crops allow us the option of growing vertically giving us more production on the same amount of land. We often do this with trellises, or cages, like tomato cages, or using fence. I spent a Friday evening recently putting in steel posts and chicken fence between my two rows of peas to give the peas something to climb. This will allow me or the deer to pick the peas more easily. We have many green beans cultivars that are good old pole beans and can use this same technique. Many of our smaller fruited vining crops, cucumbers, summer squash and even some melon varieties can use fences or trellises for support. Take a minute and consider taking your garden vertical! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Orchardgrass

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I was walking across my yard recently and saw that orchardgrass was becoming quite evident. Orchardgrass is a cool season perennial bunch grass that comes into yards as seed contamination in bags of cheap tall fescue seed. It is very obvious this time of year, growing twice as fast as fescue, being much lighter green and often having a very sprawling open bunchy growth habit. Unfortunately, there is no easy fix to get it out of your yard. The two options are dig it out, replace the soil and replant with a high quality improved fescue seed mix OR spray with glyphosate and replant after it dies with a high quality improved fescue seed mix. The glyphosate will kill all the vegetation that it is applied to so use it with caution and use a very directed application with low pressure or use a pre-mixed trigger sprayer. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Spring Flowering Bulb Care

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. One advantage to a late cool spring is that those spring flowering bulb blossoms will usually last a lot longer. Which I can attest to with my own this spring. But once those flowers start to fade you need to take care of them. The time to fertilize spring flowering bulbs is when they first come through the ground. If you didn't do that earlier however, do it now. Cut off the flower as it starts to die down but leave all the foliage. Removing the flower prevents the plant from wasting energy trying to make seed and leaving the foliage on until it dies down on its own gives the plant maximum opportunity to store up food reserves which it will use next spring to produce even more flowers. Once the leaves have died down cut them off at ground level. Do not pull the leaves off as you can partially dislodge the bulb. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Rhubarb Seed Stalks

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. If you grow rhubarb you know that eventually, they will send up some seed stalks. While newer varieties are less likely to do this than old standbys, all rhubarb may send up seed stalks under the right conditions. If you see these start to form, immediately cut them off low. If you don't, the plant will use precious energy developing seed that should go into developing more leaves and a bigger crown, which is the ultimate goal. The seed stalk should be easy to spot as it will grow straight up with small leaves and it will have a hollow stem. Interestingly, rhubarb plants that are grown from seed are usually more inclined to develop seed stalks which is why you only want to plant starts from known and named cultivars. Established plants can be harvested for about eight weeks in the spring and then let it rest. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Pruning Shrubs

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. With nicer weather finally arriving, I'm sure gardener spring fever is exploding. However, we need to be careful, when we have pruning shears in hand, not to get too carried away when it comes to pruning shrubs. We have three classes of shrubs - early bloomers, summer bloomers and evergreens. Early bloomers, like lilac, spirea, forsythia, etc. - those that bloom first thing in the spring, should not be pruned until just after they have bloomed or you'll cut off the blossoms. Summer bloomers, like roses and butterfly bush, can and should be pruned now to encourage new growth which is where the blooms will be. Lastly, evergreens, especially junipers can be pruned now but I encourage waiting until after they've put on spring growth so you only have to do it once per growing season! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.