

Gardening with Chuck Programs for February 14 - 20, 2022

So You Got Some Flowers!

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. It's Valentine's Day, which fortunately isn't nearly as stressful as it was when my wife was a florist. Glad those days are behind us! IF you did get some flowers for Valentine's Day you want them to stay as fresh as possible as long as possible. So here's a few hints. If they came in a vase or arrangement, the most crucial thing is to keep the vase filled or floral foam soaked with warm water. Check the water at least once if not twice a day. If the water turns cloudy, dump it all out and immediately replace with fresh. If you received loose flowers quickly get a container filled with warm water, cut off about a half inch of the stem and remove any leaves that would be below the water surface. If the loose flowers came with some flower food dry packet, get it added to the water and then enjoy your flowers! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Peach Leaf Curl Control

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. If you have peach trees then you've probably had years, maybe every year, when just after the tree is well leafed out the leaves start to distort, turn reddish yellow and then fall off. This is peach leaf curl and once you see the symptoms, it's way too late to do anything about it! You need to treat before the leaf buds start to swell so anytime in the next 3 to 4 weeks. The active ingredient chlorothalonil is the product of choice and is available in several garden and fruit tree sprays. If you are going to prune your peach tree do it first and then spray the entire tree, possibly even twice from opposite sides. The disease overwinters on the bud scales and by spraying now you essentially vaccinate the tree so new leaves aren't infected. Follow label directions and make sure it's above 40 degrees when you spray. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Pruning Young Fruit Trees

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Many homeowners plant fruit trees, do nothing for 5 or so years, then call me and ask when they should start pruning. My standard response is, the year after you planted it! Most fruit trees come from the nursery in pretty good shape so the first year pruning is often not needed. Since most people want dwarf trees you want to prune them so they have 3 to 4 scaffold branches either coming off as a spiral or as a vase. You don't want any of these scaffolds lower than 18 inches from the ground for ease of pruning and convenience. You want them to have attachment angles of 60 to 80 degrees for maximum strength. These scaffold should be at least 6 to 10 inches apart without being directly opposite or below another scaffold. Get young trees started off right and it'll save you a lot of issues later on! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Pruning Fruit Trees

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Many home orchardists contact me wanting information on pruning fruit trees. And they want a recipe so they know to prune at x, y, and z. Unfortunately it doesn't work that way and every tree is a new adventure. Some dwarf trees were planted too deep so they rooted above the graft and you now have a full size tree. We do have a really good bulletin on pruning fruit trees and I can come out and give you some general points of consideration. A good start is to prune out dead, broken or damaged branches. Prune out all suckers - those branches that just grow straight up, several feet in one year. Take out branches that are too low or branches that are crossing over and rubbing on each other. In general we never want to take out more than 30% of the growth in any one year. So you'd better get started, it's time! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Pruning Overgrown Apple Trees

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I receive a lot of phone calls from homeowners that want some advice on pruning their apple tree. I go out to their house and the first thing they say is, I think it's a little overgrown. I get into the back yard and here is a 30 foot tall tree that is nothing but a tangled mess. But they want to keep it because their father or grandfather planted it 60 years ago. Folks, if you have a tree like this, I'll be bluntly honest. There is no realistic way to get it back to a workable size to produce quality fruit. Yes, it can be done over the next ten years and it will be a major shock to the tree. We can clean it up a little bit so it's easier to mow under, but if it has sentimental value, leave it as an ornamental. If you want a tree for some serious fruit production, let's just start from scratch with a new tree somewhere else in the yard. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.