

Gardening with Chuck Programs for January 3 - 9, 2022

Plan Your Transplant Start Dates

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Many gardeners love to start their own vegetable, or even flower transplants. I completely understand that. But then they make the mistake, thanks to spring fever, of starting the seeds way too early and then when it's finally the right time to transplant, they have tomatoes that are 18 inches tall and spindly as a coat hanger wire! For most of the vegetables that gardeners want to start inside I have a handy little chart that shows recommended transplanting date, how long it'll take to get the plants to transplant size and then when to start those seeds. Since about the earliest you can appropriately transplant anything outdoors is March 15th we're still a couple weeks away from starting, unless your growing onions, keep listening later in the week for tips on that. But tomato starting time isn't until March 30th! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Preventing Tomato Diseases

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. In the first week of January the most you should be doing with your garden is making your planting plan. One of the crops I talk a lot about is tomatoes because a lot of people plant tomatoes and I get asked a lot of tomato questions. One of those questions is how to keep that disease off the leaves that eats the leaves from the bottom up. Well, the best way to prevent this evil disease is to plant tomatoes with enough space to keep air moving freely around them to keep the leaves dry. When I plant tomatoes I try to keep them on a 3 by 3 foot spacing. Tomato plants can get big and need a lot of space, we generally recommend that rows for tomatoes be 3 to 4 feet apart and that plants be 2 to 4 feet apart within the row. Many people buy way more plants than they have room for, so they squeeze them in and problems start! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

How Soon Can I Start

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Come on folks, it's the first week of January. You can not have spring fever that bad already! But I know people are pouring over those catalogs and seed supply web sites., As for me, I'm drawing out my garden plan on my graph paper (totally old school ya know), and just now starting to order seed. But some of you want to know how early you can start. I've known gardeners who have stuck peas and potatoes in the ground before the end of February. I can not encourage that kind of reckless gardening activity. The number of times I've seen any success from that kind of early planting around here I don't need any fingers to count on. Depending on how things are going, just about the earliest you can realistically start with early gardening is March 15th and that's assuming you tilled last fall! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Wait Now on Weed Control

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We probably had a much later window of opportunity this year, than in many autumns, to apply late season broadleaf weed control. My normal guideline is that weeds won't go really dormant until it gets below 25 degrees which this year didn't occur until mid November. But we've been well below that 25 degrees now on several occasions so even though some of those little weeds may still be green, treating on a warm day now isn't going to accomplish much other than getting you out of the house! Every day right now we are gaining about a minute of daylight and by early March, or earlier even, those little weeds will be starting to grow. The purple haze of henbit will be here before we know it in fact. But for right now, just keep those herbicides tucked away in a warm spot and wait for March! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Starting Onions from Seed

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Most people just plant onions either as sets, the small bulbs or as plants. Sets are fine for scallions as they are often, un-named other than color. But for a challenge you can also start onions from seed. If you want to do this you need to start NOW because it will take 6 to 8 weeks to get plants to a transplantable size so you can get them in the garden in late March. Onion seed should be placed $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch apart in a pot filled with a seed starting mix. Keep this pot warm until the seedlings emerge, it'll look like blades of grass by the way, and once they are 1 to 2 inches tall move to a cooler location and under bright lights. I use 4 foot LED shoplights in a frame with chains so I can set them low or move them up as they grow. Start fertilizing when they are 3" tall and clip the ends of the leaves at 5 weeks. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.