

## Gardening with Chuck Programs for July 18 - 24, 2022

### Remove Suckers and Watersprouts

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. If you have fruit trees especially, and to a lesser extent small new shade trees, then you are very familiar with suckers and watersprouts. Suckers are those growths at the base of a tree. Apple trees are very prone to them as are maple trees. Energy going into growing them is not going in to the rest of the tree. They need to be removed. There's some evidence that removing them mid summer results in fewer coming back on. There's also some indication that if you catch them when they are small and nub them off with your thumb, they are less likely to regrow so quickly.

Watersprouts, on the other hand, are those branches that come out of the main trunk or main branches of your apple or pear tree and grow straight up, sometimes 5 to 7 feet in one year. Get those cut out now as well! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Green June Beetles

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. If you haven't seen them yet, I'm sure you soon will; green June beetles. These are those big, slow flying, noisy scarab beetles that many people mistake for bees. They are clumsy fliers. They fly into the sides of buildings. They fly into pets and if you stand still long enough, they'll fly into you! The biggest problem with green June beetles is that big beetles have big appetites, and one of their favorite foods is fruit just as it becomes ripe. They seem to be quite fond of peaches, blackberries and from personal experience, pears too! If you have one green June beetle feeding you'll soon have more. Carbaryl and malathion both can be applied to ripening fruit as a repellent of sorts. Products with Neem oil in it also seem to offer some repellency. Be sure to read labels for days after application until harvest. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Squash Blooms

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Our vine crops including all forms of squash, melons, cucumbers have a couple of things in common. All of these have separate male and female blossoms and they all need bees to cross pollinate them to bear fruit. Male blossoms vastly outnumber female blossoms and often start blooming two full weeks before the female blossoms come along. Which explains why some gardeners call me wanting to know why their squash are blooming so prolifically but they are getting no squash developing. If the blossom is attached to the stem with a slender filament then it is a male flower. If the blossom is attached to the stem with something that looks like a miniature version of a squash or melon or cucumber, then that is a female flower. So before you think your vine is a dud, start checking those flowers! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Watering Fruit Trees

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. If you have fruit trees of any kind, the next 4 to 6 weeks is a critical time frame. For apples, pears and some peaches, the fruit is getting ready to put on it's big growth spurt. Lack of soil moisture right now can really impact fruit size and quality. A slow running hose under your fruit trees or even a soaker hose coiled around inside the drip line is a good way to soak up the soil IF it hasn't been raining. But equally important to this year's fruit crop is the fact that now is when fruit trees are developing flower buds that will bloom next spring. Fruit trees are making these buds now. They will be microscopic but they are there and drought stress at this time of year can seriously impact their development. Anytime from now through early September, if it is starting to get dry, give your fruit trees a long slow drink! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Cracking Tomatoes

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Tomatoes sometimes have problems developing cracks especially on the top half of the fruit and frequently worse with larger slicing tomatoes. Cracks form from hydraulic pressure within the tomato fruit being greater than the skin of the tomato can withstand. Cracks can be concentric circles in the upper half of the fruit or radiating down the fruit from the stem. A common cause for this is a big rainstorm after a period of drought. It is more likely to happen later in the summer after tomatoes have developed a larger root system. There are also varietal differences with some varieties being far more crack resistant. One way to reduce this problem is to maintain as consistent soil moisture condition as possible so there aren't big swings in soil moisture levels. Regular watering helps as does mulching. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.