

Gardening with Chuck Programs for June 27 - July 3, 2022

Still Time to Plant Winter Squash

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Even though we are about to say goodbye to June, there's still time to plant winter squash if you hurry. I generally refer to acorn and butternut squash as our principle winter squash. These have fairly short seasons so you can plant them in late June and have them ready to harvest just ahead of our normal first frosts. Get the seed in the ground soon. I normally plant 5 to 8 seeds per hill about one inch deep, water them down well at planting and keep them watered. Keep weeds down as they grow fast this time of year and then use a little well balanced fertilizer about 3 weeks after planting and again 3 more weeks after that. While winter squash are more resistant to squash bugs, keep an eye on them to make sure they don't overwhelm the plants. Once harvested in October, keep at cool room temperature. Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Garlic and Onion Harvest

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Garlic and onions are both members of the allium family but we harvest them very differently. Garlic we want to harvest when there are still 4 to 6 green leaves on it. Onions we often wait until about 3/4 of the tops have fallen over. Garlic is more sensitive to heat and once the leaves start to go, soil temperatures can cause the garlic to get hot and shorten storage life of the bulbs. Onions aren't quite as sensitive but you do want to get them harvested before everything is totally dead. It's important to get the plants dried down after harvest. You want the neck - that area about an inch above the bulb, to be totally dry, no moisture in it. I gather both my onions and garlic together, tie them up with twine in bundles of 8 to 12 and then hang in a warm dry place for them to cure, which may take 3 to 4 weeks. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Brown Patch in Lawns

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. With a string of nights where it never got below 70 lately, is a good indication that we will be seeing, or already seeing brown patch especially in tall fescue lawns. Brown patch shows up as circular areas in the lawn where the turf looks like it's dying. An examination of the grass leaves on the edge of the afflicted area often show brownish lesions. It is going to be most apparent on irrigated lawns or in warm rainy or humid conditions. Brown patch is a very common fungal disease that can develop very rapidly, think 48 hours. It normally just kills the leaves and the crown of the plant is still fine. So once it cools down, new leaves come out and everything is none the worse for the wear. If you have bad brown patch year after year you may want to apply a fungicide proactively but most of the time it isn't needed. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Iron Chlorosis in Lawns

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Early summer is when we often see spots in lawns, especially bluegrass lawns, turn pale green or sometimes flat out bright yellow. If the lawn is uniformly pale, and you irrigate and you bag your clippings, then you likely have nitrogen deficiency. If however the lawn is patches of bright yellow then you are seeing iron chlorosis. A quick check is to buy some chelated liquid iron and spray it on the spots. If it turns dark green, then that's the problem. Generally our soils have adequate iron, but even slightly alkaline soils can cause the iron to be tied up and unavailable to the plants. Often the problem clears up once the weather cools off so simply spraying chelated liquid iron might be the easiest solution. Long term solutions require applying sulfur granules like fertilizer, watering it in and waiting for it to work! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Tomatoes Not Setting Fruit

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. The tomato season is really getting into full swing now with many gardeners anxiously awaiting the first tomato of the season. One of the things that frequently frustrates tomato growers is when they see lots and lots of blossoms and NO fruit forming. We saw a lot of this earlier this season when we were having some of that very warm weather. Basically, daytime highs of 95 degrees or above will stop fertilization of tomato flowers. In short, excessive heat causes the pollen tube, which is crucial to fertilization, to explode thus the pollen grain can not get to where it needs to go. While frustrating, it isn't permanent. Tomatoes will keep blooming and just a day or two with temperatures below 95 degrees can allow a lot of flowers to get pollinated and tomato formation to get going! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.