

## Gardening with Chuck Programs for May 16 - 22, 2022

### After the Storm

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We've already seen a couple of pretty good spring thunderstorms and we'll likely see more. If we don't it's going to be a long dry summer. Thunderstorms frequently contain wind and heavy rain, even if briefly, as well as hail of nearly any size. Any and all of these can make our gardens look pretty sad immediately afterwards! As humans we have a nurturing instinct to immediately go out and try to "help" our plants. What I can tell you though is that the most important thing we can do after a storm is basically NOTHING! Sure, go out and check the garden after the storm and remove any tree branches that may have fallen on the garden and that is it. Trying to straighten up wind swept plants will likely cause more damage and can even break plants off. It's hard to accept. But Mother Nature has this! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Cedar Apple Rust

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. That rainy weather earlier this month sure cranked out the rust galls on the cedar trees. There are three different rust diseases that go between junipers, cedars if you will, and various plants in the rosaceae family. Cedar apple rust is the most obvious but both quince and hawthorn rust galls were obvious as well. The thing to remember is that these visible structures on the cedar trees were releasing spores to fly over and infect susceptible alternate hosts like apples, pears, quince or hawthorn. They don't really do a lot of damage to the cedar tree but can cause major issues on the alternate host. To protect the leaves of apples or pears you need to be spraying with fungicides starting in late April through early June. Treating now likely won't do any good so just remember to treat next year! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Sycamore Anthracnose

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Sycamore trees are big trees with exfoliating bark that are often used in large lot landscapes and are native along our rivers, streams and creeks. For as long as sycamores have been around there has been a disease called sycamore anthracnose. It infects leaves during rainy periods in May. After a few weeks the leaves turn brown or black, shrivel and fall off. The tips of branches then die back a few inches. The trees look horrible for a while but then leaf back out, new branch tips generate from buds still alive and everything is good again. We likely had an infection period a couple of weeks ago and before long the effects of that will start to show up. If you have a sycamore tree in your yard do not panic. Do not pay someone to spray it as that's a waste of money. Your tree will be fine just as it always has been! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Keep Those Plants Watered

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Last week we hit what I'll call instant summer. While a little dry weather stress will help encourage the roots to develop deeper, too much stress is also not a good thing AND early in the season, especially for recently transplanted garden plants or flowers or even recently planted trees and shrubs, these new root systems are still trying to get going. We normally figure that an inch of rain or irrigation a week is needed for plants to grow well. For plants in containers however, it may take a little bit more. We've been watering our potted plants every day or every other day especially when it's been windy. For plants in the ground, check their condition first thing in the morning. Even well established plants with good moisture can look wilted on a hot afternoon. If they are wilted in the morning, then they need water! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Start Planting Sweet Potatoes

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We often talk about tomatoes and peppers being sort of cold weather, cold soil wimps. Well, sweet potatoes make those look like Eskimos! Sweet potatoes want lots of warm weather and lots of sunshine - the more of each the better. But finally the ground is good and warm which is what the sweet potatoes want. From now until late June is time to plant sweet potatoes. We normally like to make a mound or ridge 8 to 12 inches high to plant the sweet potato slips on. This will provide more area for the fleshy roots to develop. If planting multiple plants on a ridge, plant them about 1 foot apart and if more than one row, make the rows 3 to 4 feet apart. The plants will vine out 6 to 8 feet. Don't go crazy with the fertilizer. Aim for a moderately fertile soil. Excessive nitrogen will cause all vines and few roots! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.