

Fall Lawn Reseeding

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. If your lawn is showing the effects of two drought years, then this fall may be a good time to replant your lawn or at least overseed your lawn. When I visit new seedings or overseedings I consistently see several things that have caused failures of the effort. First and foremost is the seed was not put into direct soil contact. Forget tossing grass seed out and having it grow. You may get ½ of 1 percent of the seed to grow, but that'll be about it. You need to get the seed about 1/4 inch into the soil so just plan to use a power seeder or work up the soil and rake or harrow it in. Then once it starts to come up, keep it damp. Once grass seed starts to sprout and grow, it will die if it dries out. Pray for rain or keep the sprinkler handy. Another problem that we've been seeing a lot of lately is low phosphorus levels. If your house is more than a few years old and you've fertilized regularly over the years your phosphorus levels are probably fine. But if you live in one of the newer developments that as pasture or field until recently, there's a very good chance that you have low soil phosphorus levels. With low phosphorus levels the grass seed will sprout and start to grow, but then it just sits there and doesn't get very big or spread out. I've seen lawn seedings with low soil phosphorus that 3 years later you could still see every single drill row. Finally, mowing. I know I may sound like a broken record, for those who remember that, but we have to be mowing our grasses taller. Three inches is a minimum, 3½ preferred. We need longer leaf blades to get those yards healthy. Set 'er tall!

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Grass Sandburs

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. August seems to be the time of year that if you have sandburs, and I'm talking the grass sandburs here, not the Mexican sandburs, you will start to feel their pain as they get caught in your socks, your pantlegs or shoelaces. Boy do they sting when you get poked with their spines! Prior to now, you just thought that the sandbur plants were part of the lawn. Most people couldn't identify the sandbur plant unless it's blooming and has seeds on it. So right now there's a limit to what we can do with sandburs. We can use the Bayer Bermudagrass control or Crabgrass control and have pretty good luck killing the large plants, but they are already producing seed. You can nuke the entire area with glyphosate, but they've already produced seed. Or you can even till everything under, but it's already produced seed. About the only option that will really reduce the seed load is to carefully remove the plants with their seeds intact and yes, I have done that in some cases. I would try to get the plants in known sandbur locations killed yet this summer before they produce anymore seed. But then you need to mentally or some way mark the area where the sandburs are and make sure to apply a crabgrass preventer there next spring. Then starting in early June, apply one of the post emerge crabgrass killers two or three times during the growing season, like the first of June, the first of July and the first of August. There will be sandbur seedlings that break through the crabgrass preventer so you want to control these escapes when they are still small, easily killed, and before they produce seed. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Dividing Daylilies

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Daylilies are vigorous growers and really need to be divided every three to four years to maintain that vigor. Now, if you don't think you want that vigor, keep in mind that this is what helps them to bloom prolifically through the summer. And if your's aren't blooming prolifically, and you haven't divided them for more than five years, that may very well be the reason why! Daylilies have a root system that is every bit as tough as they are. One of the most valuable tools that you can have to aid in dividing daylilies is a spading fork, and get two of them while you're at it. If it's only been a few years since you divided your daylilies, you may be able to do it in place. Simply dig down with the spading fork and start peeling off fans that you can plant elsewhere until you've reduced the size of the in-place clump. But if it's been way too long since you've divided your daylilies, dig the whole clump up and get it out on top of the ground where you can work on it. Then start inserting the spading forks back to back and start working the clump apart into manageable smaller clumps. Your goal is something the size of a head of cauliflower. An alternate method is to throw the clump on the lawn, get out the garden hose and nozzle and start washing the soil off and rolling the roots around on the lawn until you can separate it with your hands. Once the dividing is done dig holes about 24 to 30 inches apart, mix a little bone meal into the bottom of the hole, replant the divisions and water down good to settle the soil. The number of flowers will be reduced the first year only. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck

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