

Fruits and Nuts

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. One of the big questions at the holidays is what to do with all those fruits and nuts. And I'm not talking about the relatives that are coming to visit! As a culture we have a long history of giving fruits and nuts at the holidays and today we still give a lot of fruits and nuts as gifts. It is always a treat to receive these wonderful edibles. But of course, the problem is that we all tend to overeat at the holidays so any way that you can spread these treats out, the better. Fruit is highly perishable. Pome fruits, like apples and pears can go in the refrigerator. Tropical fruits, like pineapples, bananas, etc, probably need to be used as soon as possible as they really don't refrigerate well at all. Citrus fruit storage life can be extended a week to ten days in the refrigerator, but don't try to push them too far. Apples and pears, can stay in the fridge for several weeks, but try to get them utilized within 15 to 20 days. Nuts are a better situation. While their high oil content causes them to go rancid quickly at room temperature, they do store well in the refrigerator and even better in the freezer. They do tend to absorb any other flavors so keep them, shelled or unshelled, in tightly fitting plastic containers or even heavy re-sealable plastic bags. Shelling them first is preferable as they'll take less room. While nuts can last up to a year in the freezer, they will be of far better quality if used within six months. So enjoy your fair share of fruits and nuts and even consider giving some of your own. You and your friends can enjoy your edible gifts this year season and into the new year as well! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Ornamental Pear Fruit

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. The past few years we have seen ornamental pear trees, often known as Bradford pears, suddenly start developing very prolific fruit crops. The resulting fruit crops result in horribly messy sidewalks, driveways and sudden irruption of volunteer pear trees everywhere. Which has caused a lot of folks to wonder why these once barren trees to suddenly become so prolific. As much as some folks would like to blame it on global warming, this isn't the case. Pear trees tend to be somewhat self sterile. And initially all of those attractive ornamental pears were of the Bradford variety. Well, Bradford pears have weak joints and they fall to pieces in wind and ice storms. So the plantsmen started selecting better pear trees with stronger joints and we all got on the bandwagon of planting these stronger pear trees. The problem was that these new and improved callery pears were just genetically different enough that all of a sudden we were getting cross pollination. These ornamental pears are very attractive to bees and they visited as many pears as possible resulting in lots and lots of cross pollination. This cross pollination has resulted in lots of fruit, a situation which is not going to change. I'm starting to discourage planting of ornamental pears. I think we need to go back to planting more flowering crab apples. Then we have to be careful where we plant any of these trees. We do have several fruitless flowering crabs so consider there near paved surfaces. Sadly there's no easy way to stop the fruit and removal of the trees may be your only option to stop the mess. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Old pesticides - what do you do with them?

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I don't know about you, but sometimes during that Christmas and New Year's lull I start to go a little stir crazy and just have to find something to do - after all, you can only eat so much and watch so much sports and then you just have to get moving and do something. A good thing to do is to back the car out of the garage, close the door back down, let it warm up a little bit and then start cleaning house, or in this case garage. I was doing a little bit of this back before Thanksgiving. It started out as an attempt to find something that I'd purchased down at Water's, which I never did find come to think of it, and I ended up spending the better part of a Saturday cleaning one corner of the garage. One of the things that seems to collect in my garage anyway is old bottles of pesticides. It may be insect killers, weed killers or fungicide for disease control, but all of a sudden I'm finding bottles that have been there for I don't know how long. First clue is that if the container is glass, it's probably at least 10 years old. Now pesticides do get old and become less effective or totally ineffective and at that point you need to get rid of it. Or, if you can't read the label at all, you need to get rid of it because you probably have no idea what it is, or you don't know how to mix it properly. The initial reaction may be to dump it on the ground in the backyard or pour it down the drain or the storm sewer. Please don't do any of these. Instead, double bag all of these containers and then take them down to the noxious weed office, 310 E 8th so that they can properly dispose of them. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.