

Side Dressing Gardens

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. One thing that every vegetable gardener and flower gardener needs to know about is side dressing. No, this isn't anything like cross dressing, it's all about fertilizing plants after they are up and growing. As it's name sort of implies, you apply a little fertilizer right along the side of the row to water in, or in the case of potatoes or corn, you can apply the fertilizer and then hill up the plants with a hoe putting the fertilizer under a little bit of soil. Many plants, both garden and floral, are heavy nutrient feeders. Unless you have taken a recent soil test and know that you have very high levels of nutrients in your soil, the plants will benefit from periodic fertilization through the growing season. With flowering plants, you want them to keep producing flowers. To do that you keep snipping off the spent flowers, so they don't make seed, and you keep fertilizing them to stimulate new growth which is going to produce the flowers! For garden plants, producing lots of produce is a drain on their system. You have to keep stimulating them and providing nutrients so that they can continue to make more tomatoes or cucumbers or whatever. Sidedressing usually is a nitrogen based fertilizer such as nitrate of soda, 16-0-0 or ammonium sulfate, 21-0-0, but you can use a general fertilizer like 12-12-12 or triple 13 if you like. In vegetable gardens apply about 2 pounds of these fertilizer per 100 foot of row. In flower beds use about 1 to 1.5 cups per 100 square feet, which is ten feet by ten feet. In general, start these sidedressings about a month after planting and then every 3 to 4 weeks. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Bagworms

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I am really surprised that I have not received more calls about bagworms yet. Probably I haven't because they are just now starting to hatch - which is later than normal. In the first month or so, bagworms are small and will be easily overlooked by most homeowners. But their feeding damage becomes obvious very early on IF the homeowner is paying attention. If you had bagworms last year and even if you sprayed, plan on spraying this year. While bagworms will feed on over 200 species of plants, they prefer cedars or junipers and their damage is most severe on these. Second behind junipers is spruce trees. They generally will not feed on pines. Early treatment, after the eggs start hatching, eggs are laid by the female in the bag she used last year, is critical. The bigger they get and the later in the season that you get, the harder they are to kill. Most lawn and garden insecticides will kill them IF properly applied. Properly applied means with lots of water, so just figure on a hose end sprayer if you are doing it yourself. Most newer products come in their own hose end sprayer so just hook them up and spray the entire plant to the point of runoff. You really want to saturate those little bags. The first treatment, this year, should be done around the 10th to the 15th of June and the second treatment about 2 weeks after the first. A newer insecticide, spinosad is a natural control product and appears to give the best control of really large bagworms later in the season. For early in the season you can use any of the synthetic pyrethroids or spinosad or even Bt. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Tattered leaves

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I've been looking at a lot of tree leaves lately.

Have you ever really looked at a tree leaf. Some have veins coming up from a central point like the fingers of your hand, others come off of a major vein down the center of the leaf....okay, maybe I've been looking at too many tree leaves lately! Okay, what I've been seeing a lot of lately is NOT insect problems, it is NOT disease problems, it is mother nature being cruel to it's own. When tree leaves first come out in the spring they are very supple, the tissue is very tender they are pretty wimpy for lack of a better term. As the season goes along the leaf surfaces start to harden off and they become a lot tougher. Windy weather, small hail, even hot dry winds, early in the season can really damage these leaves. We've had some thunderstorms come through our area this spring with some high winds, over 100 mph in at least one case. Winds like this, accompanied with even a little rain, can shred leaves often making them look like they were insect eaten. This damage is more noticeable in young trees as they have less mass of leaves to protect themselves so they get whipped up more and it's more noticeable. The best thing to do is put a couple of fertilizer spikes in the ground around these trees and if it turns off hot and dry later in the summer, keep them watered well every couple of weeks. Normally the tree will put out some new leaves to compensate and as long as those torn leaves are still green, they are still carrying on photosynthesis and providing food to the tree. So basically, look the other way and don't fret! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.