

Planting Garlic

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Growing garlic is a lot like growing wheat. You have to start in the fall as the small garlic plant has to go through a cold treatment before it will multiply. Two years ago, because of the early hot spring, my garlic crop was pretty sad. But this year, with the extended cool weather through May, it was awesome. So, two really important things to keep in mind about garlic, plant it in the fall, and keep it as cool as possible the following year. You want to plant as big a bulb as possible. The bigger the bulb you start with, the bigger the bulbs, or cloves, that you harvest. Check with garden centers for seed garlic but if you can't find any there, I can give you some good on-line sources to order from. While the first part of October is garlic planting time, anytime in October should work! You can just buy garlic in the grocery store and plant it, but I'll guarantee that you will be happier if you get high quality seed garlic. Apply 3 pounds of a triple 13 fertilizer and work into the soil before planting. Plant individual cloves pointed end up, 3 inches apart and 1 to 2 inches deep. Water well and mulch down with straw. Then, next spring, keep the garlic bed well mulched down. Like I said, garlic doesn't like hot temperatures, so the cooler you can keep the soil in the spring and early summer, the bigger the bulbs will get. Also, keep the soil well watered, but not soggy. Soggy soil can cause rots to develop on the cloves. Once the leaves start to brown down in the summer you want to harvest your garlic, dry it or cure it and get it into storage! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Planting Spring Flowering Bulbs

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. If you want to add some early season color to your yard, then it starts this fall with planting spring flowering bulbs. There are many different both common and obscure bulb species to plant, but unless you have a lot of experience with spring flowering bulbs, I'd recommend that you start with the common things like tulips, crocus, daffodils - sometimes called jonquils or narcissus, and hyacinths. These are about the simplest and most full proof spring flowering bulbs that you can plant. I'm not a big believer in getting in too big of a hurry to get these bulbs planted. This year, like most years, the ground is still pretty warm, although it'll cool down pretty quickly now. I've had excellent luck planting bulbs in mid to late October. Basically you want the bulbs to start to root down and get established, but not have so much growth that they start to come up. Because many of our soils are very heavy with clay you also need to know that every 3 to 4 years you will probably need to dig up your bulbs, separate them and reset them to keep them blooming well. The biggest mistake that people make in planting bulbs is to not plant them deep enough. If the directions say to plant the bulbs 6 inches deep, then that's the depth to the top of the bulb, not the bottom of the hole. If you are going to error in planting depth, error on the side of a little deeper than too shallow. I also encourage planting bulbs in a grouping rather than spread out as individual plants. A grouping gives a much better splash of color. Get them planted, and then water them in good to get the soil settled. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Planting Trees in the Fall

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. While many people are thinking about wrapping up the growing season in October, I'm still thinking about planting. Garlic, spring flowering bulbs, peonies and yes, trees. Fall can be a great time to get new trees in the ground so that when they start growing next year, they are already in place and ready to go. Now let's say right up front that not all tree species do well with fall planting. There are a few species that simply don't have very much, if any, fall root growth and should not be planted in the fall. Included in this list is: beech, birch, redbud, magnolia, tulip poplar, willow oak, scarlet oak, black oak, willows, and dogwood. However, that leaves you a whole lot of other trees that you can plant. Bur Oak, Chinkapin Oak and Red Oak can all go in the ground now as can junipers, maples, walnuts and pecans, lindens or basswood and if you must, pines as well. And I won't even go into all the shrub species! Planting a tree in the fall, especially after leaf drop, also often means that you don't need to stake it either. With little wind load from the leaves, there's little worry about strong winds tilting the tree. One thing that is a concern anytime you plant a thin barked tree, mainly maples, is winter sun scald. Warm sunny winter days can warm up the bark on the south or west side of the tree to the point that sap will start flowing. But then sudden drops well below freezing can cause the sap to freeze and then you have a damaged area of bark that will show up a year or two later. Using tree paper wrap just during the winter can help prevent this problem. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.