

## Winter Travel Tips

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. We're just a couple weeks away from Christmas, and then New Years and of course, we're heading right into the teeth of winter. Which may mean nothing or it could mess up some of the travel plans many folks have for the holidays. Surviving winter weather travel comes down to two things - being aware and being prepared! Being aware means listening to local weather forecasts. When there is a chance that wintry weather may be developing a winter weather watch or a blizzard watch or something like that will be issued. It simply means that conditions are shaping up that may create cold and or snowy conditions. When wintry weather is imminent a warning will be issued. Because a shift of as little as 20 or 30 miles can mean the difference between one inch of snow or 6 inches of snow forecasts will never be perfect. But even one inch of snow, with or without wind, can make for extremely hazardous travel. The biggest mistake that people make is to head out in a winter warning when they should just stay home and wait for the conditions to improve. A majority of travel can be delayed - sure, it may interrupt your plans, but it's better than interrupting your life! If you do have to travel, have emergency supplies in the car. Plenty of clothing, extra water and food are the most critical. Be prepared if you get stranded even if traveling less than 50 miles. Always make sure that you have at least a half tank of gas in your car in the winter. But the most important thing you can do is be aware and then don't travel in wintry conditions unless it's an emergency! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck

Otte.

## Controlling Volunteer Trees

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. We periodically run into good weather for a day or two as we move through the winter months. Gardeners have been known to get a little antsy on days like this and wish they could be doing something outside. One task that is suited to those warm winter days is controlling volunteer trees. This assumes that those are trees from seed, not the root sprouts we see in some species. With the exception of cedar trees, most trees will just re-sprout and keep growing if you cut them off, so they need to have some herbicide treatment.

While there are many herbicides that can be used for what we call a cut stump treatment, I find that triclopyr and glyphosate as a concentrate, seem to work the best. Triclopyr is found in many stump and brush or poison ivy killers - glyphosate is the active ingredient found in Roundup, Kleenup and similar products. The trick is to cut the little tree off and treat it within a minute or two. Because I sometimes lose track of where I am, I prefer to treat as soon as I cut it off. Even in landscape beds and around desirable plants, if you are careful you can get good control in the dormant season. Get a small paint brush to apply the concentrated herbicide. Cut the volunteer tree off with your loping shears or hand pruners. I like to cut it about one half inch above the ground and then wet the entire cut surface with the paint brush that was dipped in the herbicide. It's best if you do this when the temperature is above freezing. There's no need to get carried away drowning the small stump, just get it wet with the herbicide. Expect about 90 to 95% control. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

## Can I Use Old Garden Seed?

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're like me, you're busy trying to get the house cleaned up a little bit for the holidays. One of the things that I'm invariably coming across our old garden seed packets. 25 years ago I'd just flat out tell you that if you came across seed that was more than one year old, just toss it out. But now days, some of that crazy seed is pretty darn pricey. Not all seeds are created equal. Some lose germination very quickly and some will last a long time. Ideally, if you knew that you wanted to keep seed for multiple years, then you'd take steps to store it properly. If I wanted to really keep seeds, I'd place them in a zip lock with as much air removed as possible and then place the zip lock inside a plastic jar and put them in the back of the fridge. If you knew for sure that the seeds were below 8% moisture, you could put them in the freezer and keep them for a long time! But most of the time, we're cleaning house and oh looky here, I've got some squash and cucumber seeds - I wonder if they are still good? So here's some general rules of thumb - left over onion, parsley and parsnip, you should probably just pitch when you find them - very short shelf life. Peppers will last about 2 years. Spinach, beets, carrots, chard and sweet corn will last 2 to 3 years. Tomatoes figure on 4 years of life. For squash and melons, lettuce and any of the crucifers or cole crops, as much as 4 or 5 years. Now that assumes kept inside and not out in a hot garage all summer long. Just an additional word, germination will usually go down so you may want to plant a few extra seeds if you use old supplies. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm

Chuck Otte.