

### Flowers for Shady Areas

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Plants are amazing organisms. Give them water, nutrients and sunlight and they grow. They grow because within the chlorophyll there are chloroplasts and within chloroplasts the miracle of photosynthesis takes place. Utilizing energy from the sunlight, photosynthesis makes the building blocks of food of food and energy for the plants and ultimately for us. It is complex, but absolutely amazing. Virtually all growing plants have chlorophyll and carry on photosynthesis. Thinking back to what I just said, what is one of the key critical things needed for photosynthesis? Other than water, it was sunlight. Energy from the sun is the catalyst that makes it all happen. Without sunlight, plants don't grow. Have you ever walked deep into the woods? In dense enough forests there is literally nothing growing on the forest floor because the sunlight is filtered and dim. The harsher the climate, the more likely this is. In the rain forest there are low light specialists. In temperate forests, like we have around here, you will have plants that leaf out early and do their thing before the canopy overhead shuts off the light. Where I'm going with this is that flowers in our yards need sunlight, usually full sunlight for most species. The list of annual plants that do well in shade is pretty darn short. Impatiens need part shade which I interpret to mean 5 to 6 hours of direct sunlight a day. Cull shade is pretty well limited to coleus, a foliage plants and begonias. If you have a spot where begonias won't even do well, you may as well plant it to ground cover because flowers need light! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

## Prairie Star Flowers for 2014

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Kansas has a challenging climate and challenging weather. No two years are alike and we can experience extremes all over the board. When it comes to growing flowers some people always seem to have incredible flowers and others struggle to get anything to bloom. There are flowers that are well adapted to Kansas weather and there are cultivars within each of these flower groups that will do better than others. Yesterday I talked about growing flowers in the shade and today I'm going to tell you where you can find a list of the absolute must have varieties and cultivars for your Kansas flower garden. Several years ago K-State Extension and Research horticulturalists started putting together a series of trials to find what flowers did best across the state. This painstaking work has resulted in a listing of flowers that even if you have a brown thumb, should do well with just a little bit of effort and care. These flowers are called Prairie Star flowers and you can pick up a copy of the 8 page bulletin on line or at the Extension Office. The listing is split up into several sections including plants for flower display, plants for foliage display and plants for containers. All of the plants will actually do well in containers but those in the container section did exceptionally well in containers. With 8 pages of listing I can't tell you everything in there but calibrachoa which look like miniature petunias did well as did many petunia and zinnia varieties. Verbena, marigolds, lantana, Impatiens, and geranium, all did well as did many others. Stop by the office for the full list! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

## Pruning Raspberries and Blackberries

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Historically, small fruit, like strawberries, raspberries and blackberries are far more consistent bearing than tree fruit. Today let's talk about pruning the brambles, AKA raspberries and blackberries. These plants are perennial plants with biennial canes. A plant lives for years, but individual canes only live for two years. The first year they grow, the second year they bear fruit and then die. These second year canes can be removed as soon as they start to die after fruiting, but most gardeners wait until now to remove them, just because it's easier. So get out there this time of year and cut out the dead canes. They are easy to identify by their lighter color and when you cut into them, they are brittle. Cut these out first. Next, pick out the half dozen or so canes that are biggest and healthiest and then remove all the other one year old canes. If there was winter freeze damage, but the dead part of the cane out. Thornless blackberries tend to winterkill worse than thorny blackberries or red raspberries so they may need more pruning. Some varieties will also sucker badly so if you have a lot of small canes coming up in the row, cut them out or dig them up and transplant them to expand your patch. In no case should you leave canes longer than 5 feet. Sure, longer canes will produce more fruit, but you will have smaller fruit. So keep the canes trimmed to five feet in length and you'll wind up with fewer but bigger berries. Once you get through pruning clean up all the cuttings as well as last year's leaves and throw in the burn pile and then sprinkle ½ cup of fertilizer around each bush. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.