

It's Finally March, Let The Gardening Begin!

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. It is finally March, so that means we can start gardening, right?! Okay, maybe not quite yet. But we are getting closer. Spring is just a few days away and winter weather that arrives at this time usually doesn't last long. Once the days become longer than the nights we really start to see things warm up in a hurry. But we still need to proceed with caution. I know some years gardeners have had peas planted by now. But not this year. If you worked your garden last fall, then you can get a jump on things, but remember no matter what time of year we are in, you never ever work in a wet garden. If that soil is wet you will make a mess! So just be patient and wait for it to dry down. Many gardeners are adamant about getting potatoes planted on St Patrick's Day. While this is a great tradition, it doesn't always work so well. Soil temperature is usually more important than the calendar, I hate to tell you. The early birds aside, I don't recommend planting anything in your vegetable garden until the middle of March. The first things in, should be peas, potatoes, radish, lettuce and broccoli, followed about a week later by cabbage and cauliflower, turnips, beets, spinach and onions. BUT if you need to work your soil and it still hasn't dried out enough, just wait! Remember, if you don't get your cold weather crops like potatoes planted in good season in the spring, you can always plant them in late July for a fall harvest. The fall garden is one that far too few gardeners take advantage of. So for the next couple of weeks, just hold your horses but get things ready to go! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm

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What Fruit Tree to Plant - Pomes

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. There is a great deal of interest in growing your own fruit and why not? Home grown fruit, picked at the proverbial peak of freshness can not be beat for taste! I've got a some apple and pear trees myself and will soon be planting more and some cherries too. But be forewarned that because of our crazy weather here, there is no guarantee from year to year about any fruit production. One year may be awesome and then next year a total bust. For tree fruits we come down to two categories - apples and pears or what I call pome fruit and then cherries, peaches and apricots or what we call stone fruits. Today I'll talk about the pomes. Apples and pears, especially when well sited and well pruned, will be about as dependable bearing as any fruit we have. There are several apple varieties that can do well in our area including Jonathan, Gala, Empire, Delicious, Golden Delicious, Jonagold and Granny Smith. Cultivars with good disease resistance include William's Pride, Enterprise, Priscilla and Redfree. While some of these may be somewhat self fruitful, it never hurts to plant two different varieties. Insects can always be a problem so if you want insect free you need to plan on regular spraying through the summer. For pears, I'd honestly stay away from Bartletts - they have too many disease issues. For a cooking pear consider Seckel and for fresh eating, consider Moonglow and Duchess. I'm also a firm believer in planting dwarf trees as opposed to semi-dwarf or full size. Be sure to stop by and pick up our bulletins on fruit tree selection and care. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

What Fruit Trees to Plant - Stone fruit

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Yesterday I talked about pome fruits, pears and apples, so let's talk about stone fruits today, specifically apricots, peaches and cherries. For a lot of reasons, mainly weather related, many stone fruits simply are not reliable producers. Starting with cherries, just forget sweet cherries like Bings. They simply are not adapted and don't bear fruit. But tart cherries or pie cherries are perhaps even more reliable than pears or apples. Good pie cherry varieties are Montmorency, Meteor and North Star. Cherries also rarely need sprays, added bonus! Apricot trees are great ornamentals and once every 5 to 8 years you'll even get a fruit crop! They, along with peaches, are prone to breaking dormancy too early, starting to bloom and then getting frosted. Siting your apricot trees can help reduce this risk and where you plant them is often just the opposite of what you may think! Apricots are self fruitful so you only need one tree and I would never plant more than two. Consider Moorpark, Goldcot, Manchu and Superb. Finally peaches. I love peaches. Fresh peaches off the tree are awesome. I hate peaches because they bloom early, get frosted and only last about 10 to 12 years on average. Again, only one tree is needed for fruit. Unlike apricots, there are some varieties that do bloom enough later that it improves your chance of fruit. Intrepid is a late bloomer and the blossoms are more frost tolerant than other varieties. Other cultivars to consider are Early Redhaven, Redhaven, Harken and Reliance. Peaches are very susceptible to peach tree borers and need several trunk treatments per year. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.