

Do I have to mow the lawn one more time?

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. As the temperature was dropping I had scores of people asking me if they HAD to mow their lawn one more time. As you can probably predict, my answer was, well, it just depends. If you don't have very many leaves on your yard and the grass isn't 6 or 8 inches tall, then no, you probably don't need to mow the lawn anymore this fall. But if you do have a lot of leaves, and I mean more than six inches and the grass is rather tall, then it would probably be a good idea to make one more pass. The problem with leaving tall grass and lots of leaves on your yard is that IF we wind up with a lot of snow, and more especially snow and ice so that it mats everything down, we can lose plants to suffocation. Grass doesn't go totally dormant through the winter. Even at cold temperatures there is still some respiration going on. Amazingly, if you get a good layer of snow on a lawn, it can insulate the lawn to the point that grass will even grow slowly under the snow. Cover that all up with snow and ice for 6 to 8 weeks and you can have dead grass. It's not just the snow or ice, is the snow and ice and the matted down grass and leaves that causes the problem. Now, this is one of those unusual years that if you didn't get your weeds sprayed by now, you can probably pretty well wait until March. Those several nights of low teens or below readings have slammed the door on most of the common lawn weeds. You could probably still fertilize as long as the ground isn't frozen. When you apply fertilizer to frozen ground there is too great a risk of nutrient run off. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

What did the cold do?

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. As a kid growing up I remember my father talking about the Armistice Day freeze of 1940. For those youngsters, Armistice Day is what we now call Veteran's Day. In a scenario very similar to what we saw this year, very nice weather precluded a massive storm system moving in to the central and upper plains. The Dakota's Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan were hammered by snow and cold. Further south, in Nebraska and Kansas it was mainly just lots of cold weather. The morning of November 13<sup>th</sup>, 1940, Manhattan had a low of 1 above. The next two mornings had lows of 2 and 5. That's a lot of cold all at once. Much like this year, the preceding fall was very very mild. A cold snap that get's that cold that fast can have a devastating impact on vegetation. In 1940 it went so cold so fast that trees still had unusually high levels of sap in the trunk. This sap froze causing incredible amounts of damage from frost cracking. Many of the apple orchards in southeast Nebraska were ruined as the freeze damage essentially killed the apple trees. So are we going to see massive amounts of tree damage with trees dying? I hope not and I don't think we will. There will be trees that show up with frost cracks next spring, far more than normal. But we had a slightly more gradual decline in temperatures. We had several days of lows in the teens and highs in the 20s and low 30s before the coldest weather hit. Plants can actually acclimate fairly quickly and the extra week of chilling weather will hopefully have saved us from having a catastrophe like 1940! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

## Preparing Horseradish

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Horseradish is a great plant and every gardener that likes horseradish needs to grow it and process it themselves at least once. You may never want to do it again, but you really need to try it once. We normally dig horseradish after a hard freeze has killed the roots, we're there now! Large roots are harvested to be used while smaller pencil sized roots can be cut into 6 to 8 inch long sections or sets that are immediately re-planted for future crops. Now the fun begins. Wash the roots and remove all the dirt then peel the roots and cut into sections. An interesting thing about horseradish is that the really strong bite develops immediately after processing. Keep in mind that horseradish and the eastern Asian treat known as wasabi are closely related, which should be a good clue to the potency of each. This next step you may want to do outdoors or at least in a garage with the garage door opened up. Use a blender or food processor to chop or grind the roots. Be sure to include a small amount of water and a couple of ice cubes. Vinegar or lemon juice is added right after processing to stop the chemical process that produces the bite of horseradish. Use 2 to 3 tablespoons of vinegar or lemon juice and a half teaspoon of salt per cup of processed horseradish. Add this immediately after processing for a milder flavor or wait up to 3 minutes for stronger flavor. The longer you wait the stronger will be the flavor, but don't wait too long. Oh, because the impact of horseradish is vapor based not tongue based hold the container away from your face when you open it up!

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