

### Bringing Plants Inside for Winter

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. The cold snap late last week caught many of us gardeners a little bit by surprise! I really only have one potted plant that I move in and out annually, but I got it inside just in the nick of time! Sometimes a sudden cold snap forces us to rush out and get plants inside before we've really had a chance to do all the proper processing of that potted plant. So about now you're thinking, "what processing? You grab the plant and you bring it inside." While this may be exactly what you do every year, you really need to do a little bit more than that or you could be regretting it all winter long! Now, don't worry, with better weather this week, you can still move your plants back outside. The big thing is that you want to inspect your plants and make sure you aren't bringing in all sorts of insect issues. In many cases you also want to clean out the tops of the pots, and maybe even do a little bit of pruning. I think an important point to keep in mind is that most of the time you are merely trying to keep that plant alive overwinter. Most locations just don't have adequate light levels to really get good growth, so you want to just keep the plant alive until you take it back outside next spring. Look under the leaves for mites or mealybugs. If necessary, spray the plant down with an insecticide a few days before bringing it in. If in the past you've had troubles with fungus gnats after bringing in plants in the fall you may want to consider doing a soil drench with insecticide diluted in water. But the bottom line is, clean the plants up, and inspect them for bugs before they come in! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Thinking about forcing some bulbs

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Many gardeners are slowly shutting things down for the winter. But you can start working now to have some mid winter color in your home by planting spring flowering bulbs in pots and then using a process called forcing to get them to bloom in a couple of months. The trick to forcing bulbs is a cold treatment. If you've got some tulips or daffodils or hyacinths, the most popular to force, that you didn't get planted you can use them or look for some clearance deals at garden centers. You want to squeeze as many bulbs into a 5 to 7 inch pot as possible. Use a good soil-less planting mix on top of gravel or rock chips for good drainage. Unlike planting in the ground, you want the tips of the bulbs right at the soil surface. Once planted you want to water thoroughly and discard any water remaining in saucers after the soil is well wetted. At this point there are a lot of options. The pots will need 10 to 12 weeks of temperatures of 40 to 50 degrees. If you have an extra refrigerator that you can set at 40 degrees it works great. Or you can dig a trench about 15 inches deep, place the pots in them, fill around the pots with soil and then leaves and sand over the top. A root cellar can work well, a cold frame. But get them into cold treatment. At the end of that 10 to 12 week period, move them into a partly shaded location with temperatures of 60 to 65. There should be some yellow sprouts starting to show and once they turn green you can bring them in to normal household conditions, keep well watered and wait for the show to begin! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

## Winterizing Your Lawnmower

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. You may not be yet but you soon will be through with your lawn mower, the roto-tiller, the weed eater or the leaf blower and there is a very understandable urge to park it, hang it up, drop it in the corner and forget about it until next spring. What I have to say about that is, **WRONG!** Take the time this fall to clean up, fix up, tune up all of that powered lawn and garden equipment. My preference would be to take your equipment in to a local small engine repair firm and let them take care of it. I'm all about keeping those trained professionals busy. Taking equipment in this time of year also removes the pressure of , "I need it fixed **RIGHT NOW**". You're in no hurry and neither are they. But if you're a handy do it yourself kind of person, that's fine too. Clean up the equipment. Wipe off the dust and grease, mud and little pieces of vegetation. Change the oil. Remove blades of mowers, clean and sharpen them. Wipe down the blade with a little bit of light weight oil before storing to protect from rust. If your equipment has a battery, remove it, clean the terminals and the connectors on the cables and store the battery in a protected location. Today's gasolines are far more stable than 50 years ago, but it wouldn't be a bad idea to drain the gasoline or at least use a gasoline stabilizer. Clean the air filter, or better yet just replace it. Replace the sparkplug and before you put the new one in squirt a few drops of oil inside the sparkplug hole to keep the cylinder lubricated. By doing all of this now, you can have your equipment ready to go first thing in the spring! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm

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