

Planting Garlic

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. A week ago my seed garlic arrived - now when I say seed garlic I don't mean actual seeds of garlic but rather the certified garlic bulbs that I separated down to individual cloves which I then planted the end of last week. The great thing about garlic is that you can plant it anytime from late October through the end of November (so you still have time to buy some seed garlic). Basically the recommendation is to plant 3 to 6 weeks before the ground freezes. Our ground doesn't USUALLY freeze until December. I discourage buying garlic from the grocery store and trying to plant it - the larger the individual cloves that larger the bulb that you harvest will be and most cloves you use for cooking aren't really all that big! Plus you have no idea what variety or type of garlic you're getting! I can provide you with some good online and mail order sources. Well drained high organic matter soils work best but even in heavier clays you can get some decent production as long as the soil doesn't stay saturated. The general recommendation is to plant in a two foot wide bed with rows nine inches apart and individual cloves 5 inches apart within the rows. Plant the individual cloves about 2 inches deep and treat this like spring flowering bulbs, that's 2 inches to the top of the clove. A little nitrogen applied this fall is fine but once they start growing in the spring really push the nitrogen fertilizer. Once you start to get growth in the spring it may be a good idea to mulch with straw. Hot soils can stop growth so keeping soils cool will keep them growing longer! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

It's often better to start small!

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Few things in the home landscape make me cringe more than to see a large tree being transplanted. By large I mean 1½ to 2 inch caliper tree and especially if that tree is a sugar or red maple. This seems to be the era of instant everything and many homeowners want instant trees with instant shade. The reality is that Mother Nature doesn't care what you may want. The truth of the matter is that while trees of that size are regularly sold, the root system is horribly inadequate to keep the plant thriving after transplanting. A 1½ to 2 inch caliper tree is going to be 10 to 14 feet tall. Even with a large root ball, there simply isn't enough of a root system to readily move enough water to the leaves to keep from having scorch in hot summer winds. Maples are also very prone to sun scald on the bark. This leads to big long dead areas that the tree will have to heal over which will take time. When a tree of this size is transplanted I tell homeowners that it will probably be 3 to 5 years before you start to see any real growth. Many times you are much better off to start with a small, 3 to 4 foot tall tree. It will have much less stress in transplanting. The root system and leaf area will be much better in balance. Keep a two foot grass free zone all the way around the trunk, cover that area with mulch, keep the tree well watered, but not drowned, and start fertilizing it the third year after planting. In just a few years that smaller tree will have caught up and surpassed the larger tree. It will be a healthier more vigorous tree and it was much cheaper to buy! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Weed and feed - yes, planting - no

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Once we get past about October 15th, we're into the home stretch with the lawn. With the rains the first part of this month, the winter annual weeds and dandelions have been sprouting and starting to grow like crazy. The grass is also growing really good right now. In established lawns, now is the time to treat for those weeds with either a liquid herbicide or a weed and feed type product. If you treated for weeds in September, I'm pretty certain you're going to find a new batch of weeds coming now that will be unaffected by that herbicide you put on earlier. So you will need to treat again. If you use a liquid herbicide, also follow up with a fertilizer application to stimulate more root growth and get your lawn ready for not only winter, but early season growth next spring. You don't have to use a winterizer type product, just use any fertilizer that is fairly high in nitrate - most of your standard lawn herbicides will fill this bill quite nicely. If you did fertilize once in September, it won't hurt to fertilize again. If you didn't fertilize in November, definitely fertilize now! But what about planting grass seed now. In a word NO! Late October is probably the absolute worst time, other than summer, to be planting grass seed. Soil and air temperatures are dropping and while we can get grass seed germinated right now, it is unlikely to develop a good enough root system to hold the grass in the ground when we start getting freezing and thawing action through the late fall and winter seasons. Keep mowing the grass tall, and mow new grass as soon as it is up to cutting height of 3.5 inches. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420

KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.