

Odds and Ends

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I have several topics this morning that I want to address, and none of them will take the full time slot, so while they may seem disjointed, please bear with me! Peonies can be cut back at any time now. Even though the leaves may still be green, the plants are essentially dormant by September 1st. If you want to move them or separate them, you can start doing that at any time. If you think the foliage is looking a little tough, you can cut it back at any time. I don't want you to just mow them off though. We have leaf diseases on peonies and if you mow them off it just scatters the leaf material around providing inoculum for next year. Carefully cut them off at ground level and remove everything from the peony bed. I also like to get out a garden rake and rake off the top to make sure you don't get a buildup of soil on the crown which can reduce blooming. You can give your first shot of fertilizer to your lawns anytime now, but don't apply fall weed control until mid October. Many of the weeds haven't even started germinating yet. Be on the lookout for yellow jackets - their colonies are getting large and aggressive. Pick up fruit under trees, use yellow jacket traps and just be careful. If you find a nest, avoid it or contact me about control options. Lastly, the annual question of whether crabapples are safe to eat. The answer is yes. But keep in mind that these are varieties usually selected for their blossoms not their fruit quality. The only thing that makes a crabapple a crabapple is fruit size. The small fruits, however, are best used for sauces, jelly, cider and apple butter! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Power Raking and Core Aeration

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. September and October is a great time to get your lawn geared up to look awesome next spring. If you need to reseed or overseed, get that done as early as you can in September. For established lawns, we'll be fertilizing and spraying for weeds, but it's way too early for fall weed treatments. I don't want to see those go down until mid October. But before we do any of that stuff, possibly even before reseeding, consider power raking or core aerating. Power raking is a thatch control operation that is done way too often. You should only power rake if you have more than ½ inch of thatch and most lawns don't have that much. Core aerating pulls cores of soil out of the yard. The core aerator is a large heavy machine that pulls soil cores about 2½ to 3 inches long out of the ground on a grid roughly 3 to 6 inches apart. These cores can lay on the soil surface and be allowed to break down over the coming weeks this fall. Core aeration opens up the soil to help reduce compaction. It's also a great way to get phosphorus into the soil profile in low phosphorus soils or to even start to raise soil pH if your lawn is too acid and you need to add lime. Lime and phosphorus do not move readily into the soil from the surface like nitrogen does. Core aeration allows the products to get into the soil profile where they can do some good. If the cores on the surface of the lawn bother you, you can drag the lawn with a section of chain link fence or a steel doormat. This will help break the soil down. Whatever method you use, the soil will fill back in and your lawn will be happier! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Done For The Season?

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. As we move on through the month of September, well seasoned gardeners are continuing to enjoy their harvest and are anticipating more produce from the crops they planted in July and August. If you aren't fall gardening, well, we can talk about that next year, but many folks, by now, are ready to just throw in the towel and be done with it all. Whenever you reach that point, you don't want to just walk away and let the crabgrass and ragweed take over, you want to start the process of getting ready for next year. Many insect and diseases pests overwinter on garden crop residue. So start by removing all garden plants from the garden and tossing in a burn pile or in the trash. Some plant residue can go in the compost bin, but I definitely would keep tomato vines out of the compost. Burn them or trash them. There's just too many disease issues that can even survive the composting process. If you have a lot of weeds and weedy grasses in your garden take the time to spray them with glyphosate also known as Roundup or Kleenup. If you constantly have a battle with bindweed, this is a great time to start getting that under control and herbicides are about the only option for this stubborn perennial weed. If you haven't tested the soil in your garden for a couple of years, now would be a good time to pull a soil sample and bring it in for analysis. Then, assuming the soil is not too wet, do a fall tillage of the garden plot. Many insect eggs, like grasshoppers, overwinter in the soil. Fall tillage, anytime between now and Thanksgiving helps reduce those pests and preps for 2015! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK,

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