

## Roses

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I love roses. I hate roses. The beauty of a good hybrid tea rose is just phenomenal. I recently had a chance to talk with a gentleman who used to be one of the rose breeders for Jackson and Perkins, now working for a different corporation. Since I have a graduate degree in plant breeding and since I love roses, this was an awesome experience. His current breeding program is focused on one thing and one thing only: leaf disease resistance. The 150,000 seeds from his crosses were grown under high disease nursery conditions and everything that survived one year of that was then evaluated for all the other things they look for in roses like bloom quality, blooming ability, etc. With this in mind I have to ask the question, are you doing everything you can for your roses or are you putting them through your own trials for survival of the fittest? By now, you should have your roses pruned. If not, and hey, I'm in that camp!, get them pruned. Next, learn what disease your roses are resistant AND susceptible to. Many of the new shrub roses, I'll resist using names, but you all know them and love them have good black spot disease resistance, but are susceptible to powdery mildew and need to be sprayed for mildew when we have conditions like we've had lately. As of yet, we don't have the perfect rose. Everything is susceptible to something. We may need to spray our roses with fungicides for diseases this time of year. Aphids may or may not need to be treated early in the season. Roses are the queen of blooms, but queens still require a lot of attention! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck

Otte.

## Early Tomatoes

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Tomatoes are the number one vegetable garden plant that gardeners in Kansas and the United States plant. I may not plant a big garden every year, but I DO plant at least a few tomatoes every year. I have no problems waiting for home grown tomatoes whenever they finally arrive. However, many other gardeners do not share in my patience. There is some strange pride in being able to claim that I had the first tomatoes in the neighborhood. I don't understand it, but so be it. But gardeners want to push the season. They want to get tomatoes in the ground as soon as possible so they can have fresh home grown tomatoes as soon as possible. But we have to remember that tomatoes are a warm season crop. The soil temperatures are up to where they need to be for planting tomatoes. Keep in mind that tomatoes planted too early and exposed to extreme chilling can go into cold shock which will delay fruit production. If you want to push the season, use a variety or hybrid known to have better cold tolerance. Only plant a few tomato plants early. Hold off on the rest until Mother's Day or later before you plant. Use a starter fertilizer high in phosphorus to offset the potential impacts of cold temperatures. And recognize that tomatoes love warm weather and trying to push them may backfire depending on the weather. Even if you have cold weather and you have to wait to transplant your tomatoes you're going to have a lot of tomatoes before the season is over. Stick with a plan and wait for warm weather to truly arrive before you start planting your tomatoes. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

## Insecticidal Soap

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. For a long time there have been recommendations to use insecticidal soap for control of certain insects on garden and ornamental plants, especially soft bodied insect pests like aphids. Using these soaps is one of the accepted organic gardening control options. And it does work for some insect pests like aphids - just don't try it for bagworms! But here's the problem, true insecticidal soaps, like Safer's Soap is a very pure soap with no additives. It may very well be the best thing to use on aphids and mites. But too often folks don't want to pay the money for that and start using dishwashing liquids or liquid laundry soap and that's where we get into trouble. Even some of the so called "pure" liquid soaps still have additives. Many have fragrances and additional products. Most are designed, naturally enough, to dissolve grease from dishes or remove dirt from clothes. You see, not all soaps are alike. Safer's soap and other insecticidal soaps are designed to kill insects. The grease removers from dishwashing soaps will also do a very effective job of removing protective waxes from the surface of leaves. These waxy cuticles are designed to protect the leaf surface from drying out too fast or serves as a barrier to some diseases and insect pests. One other problem is that all those household use soaps aren't cleared by the EPA to control insects on plants so they are actually illegal to use for pest control. If you want to use soap to control insect pests, I don't have a problem with that. Just be sure you are using a true insecticidal soap so as not to cause harm to the plants! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm

Chuck Otte.