

Sunflower Headclipping Weevil

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. We annually see, in sunflowers and sometimes flowers like coneflower and strawflower, flower heads that are apparently chewed off, right in the prime of their bloom. This busted off flower head hangs there for a while, a sad reminder of a blossom never to be fulfilled and then drops to the ground to be forgotten like yesterday's news. This is not a random occurrence, but the action of the sunflower headclipping weevil. The female weevil goes around the stem below the head and makes a series of perforations that cause the head to break over. She then lays her eggs in the head, the head drops to the ground, the eggs hatch, the larvae feed and then usually leave the head and burrow into the ground to overwinter. They emerge next year and it starts all over again. There is one generation of this rascal a year and their activity should be winding down. Often the flowers put up secondary flower heads and all seems fine. We don't recommend spraying for this pest as there are so many beneficial and desirable insects that utilize sunflowers as a food source. What we recommend instead is sanitation. Every few days go out and remove the busted over flower heads as well as any that are on the ground and throw them in the trash or the burn barrel. By removing these heads as soon as possible you remove the developing larvae from the area before they can get into the soil to repeat the cycle next year. If you just throw them in the compost pile the larvae still have a food source. So the rascal weevil is frustrating, but this is one case where spraying is not the answer!

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Pay attention to grass seed labels

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. First of all I need to start reminding all my lawn fanatics of our Fall Lawn Care Clinic the evening of September 2nd at the 4-H/Sr. Citizens Center. I've scheduled this to coincide with when we need to start working on our lawns to start getting them back into shape so they'll look awesome next spring! Much of the challenges we are looking at right now come down to basic errors in management and I want to help you fix that. There's no charge for the clinic but please pre-register by calling 238-4161. And if you have problem weeds in your yard, bring a sample with you that evening. One thing that many homeowners overlook when they buy grass seed and that's what's in the bag. For this fall you should be planting tall fescue or Kentucky bluegrass. But before you buy that bag of seed, look at the label. Once you get past that it's all tall fescue or Kentucky bluegrass pay attention to the section called percent other crop. Percent weed seed is probably going to be zero as they all know better than to allow weed seed in your mix. But there are grasses that are considered crops that you don't want to have in your mix, namely orchardgrass and rough bluegrass. Orchardgrass is that clumpy light green grass that grows twice as fast as everything else in the spring and is a common contaminant in cheap tall fescue seed especially K-31 tall fescue. If you see more than 0.01% other crops listed, put the bag back and move on to a different source. Orchardgrass is a pain in many lawns and not easy to get rid of other than killing the clumps and overseeding! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Fertilize Strawberries Now

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. In our vegetable gardens we are dealing with an annual production cycle. We fertilize the growing plants and care for them and we see relatively quick returns from investment of time and material. When you are dealing with perennial plants you have to take a different approach. You need to know that the crucial time frame can be as much as 8 or 9 months ahead of the harvest. Strawberries are like that. At this time of year strawberries are trying to produce runners and daughter plants. It is these daughter plants that will be the workhorse of berry production next year, especially in the more productive spring or June bearing varieties. So you want to encourage runner and daughter plant development AND fruit bud development in the upcoming weeks. We generally want to apply $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ pound of nitrogen per 100 foot of row. Something like a 12-12-12 is good for this as it also gives a good shot of phosphorus. $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ pound of nitrogen would be equivalent to 5.5 pounds of 12-12-12 per 100 foot of row. It's probably a good idea to water this in as soon as it is applied rather than waiting to see if it is going to rain. This is also a good time to walk the strawberry patch and get it weeded so you don't have weeds and grasses taking up those valuable nutrients. If you have a lot of grass invading your strawberry bed you can use a labeled post emerge grass control product such as Hi-Yield Grass Killer with sethoxydim. Use a spreader sticker to improve control. If you use it on ever-bearing strawberries do not harvest for seven days following application. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck

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