

Gardening With Chuck for December 29 - January 4, 2015

What to do with that Christmas Tree

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Most of us take down our Christmas tree sometime from January 1st on. If your tree is stored away between Christmas seasons, then you can just tune out now. But if your's was recently an actual living and growing tree you now have the conundrum of what to do with the remains of what was once your lovely pine, spruce, fir or cedar. The absolutely worst thing you can do is to throw it in the trash. While it may be convenient, it's a waste of perfectly good organic matter! Once again this year, Geary County Fish and Game Association will be collecting the trees and they'll be taken somewhere to make wildlife habitat. Collection point again this year is 14th and Jackson, look for the sign. Make sure you get all your decorations removed before you take it to their collection point which I will share with you once I hear. For me, my Christmas tree, once we take it down after New Year's Day, will go in my back yard to reside under my bird feeders. I just lay mine down, I've seen some folks tie it upright to a nearby tree. Regardless, the birds will use it for shelter and cover during the months ahead. If you have a chipper shredder you can also run your tree through it and turn it into some really awesome, and great smelling, mulch. If you don't have a chipper shredder you can just cut the branches off and use them as protective cover over tender perennials. The main trunk can be cut up and burned in a wood stove after it dries down. I wouldn't recommend putting it in a fireplace as the resin causes a lot of popping and sparking. But please don't trash you tree! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420

KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Feeding the Birds

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I feed the birds all year round. The feeders change from season to season and the feed changes from season to season, but there are always feeders in my backyard. Some people feed during late fall, winter and early spring only, and that's fine too. Most of us feed birds because we like to get them in close to the house where we can see them. Whether our feeding the birds makes any difference in their survival is up for debate and I don't really care, I just want them close to the house! If you normally feed the birds and haven't gotten your feeders filled yet, then you'd better get to it. It is officially winter now you know. It doesn't take a lot of investment to feed the birds. You can pick up one fairly inexpensive feeder to hang in a tree, fill it with seed and you're in business. If you have very many trees around your property you are pretty well assured that you'll get birds to your feeder in pretty short order. One question I get all the time is what kind of feed to put out. If you have any kind of hanging feeder, just fill it with black oil sunflower seed. Everything likes black oil sunflower and you have far less waste than if you use the mixes. The mixes are fine if you have a ground feeder, but in raised feeders, the birds just toss out everything else as they get to the sunflower. One other thing to consider is a heated bird bath. When we have a lot of freezing weather, open water can be at a premium in Kansas and having an open bird bath can bring in as many birds as the feed can. It can also bring in birds, like bluebirds, robins and waxwings, that won't eat the seed in our feeders! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Gardener's New Year's Resolutions

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. It just wouldn't be new year's if I didn't have some gardener's new year's resolutions. Now remember, I'm not poking fun at anyone in particular, just gardeners in general. So if any of these make you a little uncomfortable, welllll, maybe you just need to think about why! First of all, I resolve to actually write down a plan and a map of what I want to plant and have room to plant before I open a single catalog or visit the garden center. The reason is obvious, but I still have to say it. And maybe I should add, I resolve to let my spouse and family have the first right of refusal to remove items from my list! Okay, the next one - I resolve that once I've had enough zucchini or tomatoes or whatever, that instead of making the neighbors run to their houses and lock the door, I'll just pull the plants up and put something else in their place. For some reason gardeners seem incapable of pulling up plants that are still producing like it's a sin or against the law. If your family and your neighbors and everyone with five miles is tired of zucchini, then pull the plants up and stop. (But remember that food pantries around the area are often pleased to receive donations of high quality fresh produce.) Finally, I resolve to have fun in my yard and garden. Too many gardeners get way too serious about their gardens. If your garden or yard is causing you frustration and it isn't relaxing to you, then maybe some changes need to be made. Our landscape should be pleasurable and enjoyable. If it isn't, maybe you are approaching it all wrong. If that's the case, you and I need to talk! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.