

What's the Value of a Home Garden

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Vegetable gardening has many intrinsic values and I'm pleased to see them becoming more and more popular. Many young families use them to help teach the youngsters the value of working the soil and growing some of your own food. Or perhaps it's really just an effort to burn up some energy in some excitable 8 and 9 year old boys! There is a lot of research out there that shows that kids are more likely to eat vegetables that they helped to grow. Even if it just gets them interested in trying a new vegetable variety or two it is probably worth it! For some of us, vegetable gardening is somewhat therapeutic in addition to good exercise. After a long week of work, it sometimes feels good to take a hoe in hand and whack the living daylights out of some of those stinking weeds!!!! Sorry, maybe I need some garden time right now! There's also sometimes a very reassuring and perhaps self satisfying aspect to knowing where your food came from and how it was produced! But a researcher at Oregon State University has been studying gardens from an economic point of view. She looked at value of vegetables produced, costs of producing them, etc. and found that the average vegetable garden had a value of 74 cents per square foot. While that may not sound like much it adds up to \$148 for a modest 200 square foot garden. Now, that assumes that you're actually going to eat what you grow! What were some of the highest value crops in this study meaning the greatest return? Well, potatoes, salad greens, beets, broccoli and, no surprise, tomatoes! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Conservation Tree Seedlings Available

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Fruit production in Kansas?

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I get calls from homeowners who want to plant fruit trees. I get a LOT of calls from homeowners who want to plant fruit trees. I encourage planting of fruit trees in our area, but it comes with a caveat. Don't expect fruit every year and don't expect certain fruit trees to ever bear. Why? Take a look at the weather right now and especially over last weekend. It was nice, temperatures in the low 60s, sunshine. Great weather for us but bad for fruit trees. Fruit trees made their blossoms for this year, in late summer of last year. Unlike leaf buds that they can generate any time, flower buds are made one time a year. If we have the wrong weather that kills those buds from now on, we just won't have any fruit.

Warm weather, like we have seen the past week, tends to get trees excited and then they bloom too soon and buds get frosted and die. People also plant the trees in the wrong place - they plant them on the sunny south side of the house when they should plant them in the last spot the snow melts to help hold them dormant. Some fruit species are more prone to break dormancy and others hold their dormancy very well. What are some of the species that are more reliable? Tart or pie cherries are probably the best followed by apple and pear. And of course, the ones that are the worst at holding their dormancy are the ones that everyone wants to plant: sweet cherries, apricots, plums and nectarines. Peaches are sort of in between. There seems to be a pretty big difference based on peach variety. For more information on fruit production in Kansas, give me a call! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.