

When Can I Start Plants Indoors?

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Here we are in the first week of January and there are already gardeners thinking about getting their bedding plants or vegetable transplants started for spring. Well, just an FYI - it's a little bit early yet especially for tomatoes and peppers, the two favorite vegetable transplants out there! Determining when to start plants indoors is based on two things - when should the transplants be moved outdoors, and how long will it take from seeding to having a plant big enough to transplant. For example, if you want to grow watermelon transplants, we know that watermelons are frost sensitive so we don't want to set them out until about the first of May. Then we can find out that watermelons are only going to take about 4 weeks to be ready to transplant so you wouldn't start the seeds until the first week of April. Tomatoes will be transplanted about May 10th. Tomatoes take about 6 weeks from seeding to transplanting, so back up 6 weeks, March 29th is when you'd start the transplants. If you want to start your own cabbage, well you'd plant that around April 1st (maybe a little earlier in a warm spring), it takes 8 weeks to get transplants up to size so you'd start your transplants in early February. Gee, maybe this isn't as far off as it seems! Same things hold for flowers. A hardy flower like pansy would be planted in late March or April 1st. But pansies take about 12 weeks to get up to size so if you want to start those from seed - it's time to get going! If you are interested in starting your own transplants, I have a sheet that shows all this information to help you plan!

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What do I do with the Poinsettia now?

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. When it comes to poinsettia care after the holidays I have a simple rule of thumb. Once it starts to look nasty, pitch it out in the trash! But some gardeners just can't bring themselves to do that. They have to try to keep it alive and then view it as a challenge to make it rebloom. First thing you need to go is get a copy of the K-State bulletin on poinsettias. You can pick one up here at the office or find it online by Googling Home Care of Poinsettias K-State. It should be the first one listed. For the rest of this winter, continue to water it when the soil is dry an inch down. Make sure that excess water can drain out so it doesn't have wet feet. Keep it in as bright a light as you have, but keep it away from cold drafts and heat sources like vents, wood stoves or fireplaces. Around late March, as daylight gets noticeably longer you should start to get new side shoots below the colored bracts. When this happens you can trim off the old leaves and stems above this new growth. If the old leaves have already fallen off simply trim the old stems 6 inches above the soil. At this time, when the new side shoots are first developing, is a good time to repot the plant. Use a combination of 1 part potting soil, 1 part sand and 1 part sphagnum moss. In mid May, after all risk of frost is past, move the plant outside. Choose a wind protected sunny place with protection from mid day and afternoon sun. Since the entire pot in the soil to the rim but come back every two weeks to rotate the pot, breaking off any roots growing out of the drainage hole and fertilize monthly. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Garden Shows Can Be A Lot of Fun!

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. One of the ways that many of us deal with winter and the subsequent spring fever is by attending garden shows. The closest garden show is the Manhattan Garden Show. This year the Manhattan Garden Show will be February 21st and 22nd, a Saturday and Sunday. I've already seen the list of speakers and there's some really interesting ones on both Saturday and Sunday. This event takes place in Pottorf Hall in Cico Park in Manhattan - that's the fairgrounds by the way. It used to be on the west side of town before Manhattan grew much further west. This garden show is free. Working further away, but earlier on the calendar is the Kansas Garden Show in Topeka. This one runs Friday afternoon February 13th through Sunday afternoon, February 15th. It takes place at the Kansas Expo Center. There is a \$7 fee for this show but it does have quite a few more vendors than the Manhattan Garden show. Sadly, the Wichita Garden Show ended a few years ago. It was a grand-daddy of the in-state shows but I think it simply became too much for folks to handle. I had the privilege to be a speaker in the last year. Moving slightly out of state and a little bit later in the year, the Kansas City Lawn and Garden Show, in conjunction with the Kansas City Home Show will be March 20 - 22nd and will be held at Bartle Hall in Kansas City. Not sure what the cost is for that show and I honestly have never been (gee, maybe this is the year!) but having a lawn and garden show with a home show just makes perfect sense to me. Most people are interested in both and they go hand in hand. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.