

### Spring Lawn Planting

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Our standard lawn grasses are, or should be, primarily tall fescue and Kentucky bluegrass. September is the best time to plant these grasses, late March and April are the second best time. Tall fescue is my preferred choice for lawns but bluegrass will work well in most situations also. The problem is, that all too often when you go to buy grass seed you are hard pressed to find something labeled tall fescue or Kentucky bluegrass. You find things like sunny mix or shady mix so you have to look at the label.

Remember, you want the majority of the seed to be tall fescue or Kentucky Bluegrass. You don't want other fescues like red or hard or sheep or chewings. You don't want annual bluegrass. You don't want ryegrass, either annual or perennial. Ryegrass just doesn't do well in most of our yards due to heat and sun. Look on that label for something called other crops. This is usually orchardgrass and even just a small percentage of orchardgrass will give you headaches for years to come. Unless you have a large area away from the house, avoid K-31 tall fescue. It simply is too coarse to make most homeowners happy. Don't sow too much seed. For tall fescue you only need 6 to 8 pounds per 1,000 square feet. If you are overseeding to thicken up a lawn, just use 3 pounds per 1,000 square feet. Plant Kentucky bluegrass at 2 to 3 pounds per 1,000 square feet. Remember that you have to get this seed INTO the soil - merely spreading it on the surface won't work. Then, if it stays dry, you need to water it. This is one case where light daily watering is okay. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm

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## Weather Extremes and Spring Garden Planting

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Last week was a classic example of why we don't want to get too anxious with that first March warm spell. Keeping in mind that we need soil temperatures in the mid 50s to get good growth out of those early garden crops, we were just getting in to the low 50s when the colder weather returned. One would hope that we'd be through with extreme cold by now, but if you remember back to spring of 2007, we had a very warm late March, and then a big cold front blew through and on Eastern morning in early April the temperature dropped into the teens! Just keep telling yourself, the average last frost is April 15<sup>th</sup> and the frost free date is about May 10<sup>th</sup>. IF you already planted your peas and potatoes and all of those other early season crops, all you can do is just ride it out. If you haven't planted yet, that's okay, there's still plenty of time. Potatoes can be planted into mid April AND you can plant again in early July for a fall crop. In fact, as we move into the last week of March there's a lot we can be planting. All those cole crops, meaning cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower can be planted. So can lettuce, radish, turnips, spinach and beets as well as the afore mentioned potatoes and peas. And by the very end of the month you can start planting onions also! Remember, while the cool down last week seemed like a bit of a shock, the cool down was really just getting back to about where the temperatures should normally be for mid to late March. The plants really didn't need that heat and the cool down will slow things down a bit so we don't get ahead of ourselves! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

## Pine Wilt

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. There are no species of pine trees native to Kansas, so it should be no surprise that we are challenged to grow pines here. For decades, pine trees have suffered through various needle diseases which, with a timely spraying of fungicide, they would survive. Tip blight is the most common one and shows up on pines once they reach about 20 years of age and start to slow down their growth. Tip blight is easily diagnosed as it attacks and kills the new shoots in the spring before they are full size. The mature needles are not attacked so one can easily see older green needles and the tips of the pine branches are stunted and dead. Fungicides need to be applied in early April and again three weeks later. The far more serious disease is pine wilt. Pine wilt is what causes entire pine trees, usually in the late summer, to go from a green to a gray green to brown in a few weeks. When pine needles turn brown and don't fall off the tree it is never a good sign. Pine wilt is spread by a beetle called a pine sawyer. Unfortunately, controlling the pine sawyer simply isn't possible and the disease can not be easily prevented. There is a treatment but it is very expensive and has to be done every couple of years. The best way to slow down the spread of the disease is to cut down dead pine trees and burn up the trunk and branches. Since the pine sawyer adults start emerging in April, this removal and burning needs to be done now so that the beetles that are about to emerge and spread the disease are burned up before they have a chance. If you have issues with your pines, give me a call! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.