

Sawflies

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I just love it when someone comes up to me and asks, "What are the worms falling off my tree all over the place?" I ask what kind of tree, and they don't know. I guess I'm part of the psychic tree pest network and I'm just supposed to KNOW what kind of tree they have and what is feeding on it. If you think I'm making this up, I'm not - it really does happen! With that said, we annually see early season insects on several species. They can be in huge numbers and be quite disconcerting to the homeowner. One group of critters that shows up on at least one species each year are the sawflies. The bad thing about sawflies is that they eat leaves and they can eat a lot of leaves in a hurry. The good thing about sawflies is that there is one generation per year, they only attack one species, they are easy to control and if you do nothing, the damage really isn't that bad. Pine sawflies attack pine trees. They will feed on the needles at the ends of the branches. Their feeding occurs before new growth comes out so even a tree that looks stripped will probably recover. Brownheaded Ash Sawflies have been active recently, sometimes dripping and dropping off of ash trees by the thousands. Sort of disgusting if you are underneath one of these trees and hard to get a large tree sprayed. But again, the damage they do happens so early that the tree easily recovers quickly. Finally there's the elm sawfly. These things are big and a funny light green. They are less common, can freak you out if one drops on you, but the best thing to do is to use them for fish bait. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Lawn Watering

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I'll warn you right now that over the next couple of years you may get real tired of me harping on water conservation. Right now you may well be saying to yourself, "My gosh we had a bunch of rain last week, why is he talking about water conservation?" The fact that we did get a lot of rain last week, easily over three inches, is exactly why I'm talking about it. How many sprinkler systems did I see running late last week? Too many and one would have been too many. With a modern era sprinkler system, there is no reason not to have a sensor to keep the system from coming on if we've had significant rain. Or better yet, learn how to shut the system off when it's raining. The amount of rain that we had, coupled with typical May weather conditions, are enough to keep any lawn going for at least two weeks. Applying irrigation water, especially daily, to a lawn that is already saturated is a horrible waste of water and money and can actually damage the lawn. Saturated soils cause nitrogen to be lost through leaching and a process called denitrification. Saturated soil conditions increase the likelihood of foliar turf diseases and can even cause loss of vigor due to root death from lack of oxygen. Simply saying "I don't know how to shut off my system" isn't a good excuse. Have the sprinkler company install a sensor to do it automatically. Have them come out and show you how to shut it off and then turn it back on when it does rain. And while they are there, also have them reset the system so it only comes on twice a week and apply a little more water when it does. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Leaf Diseases

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. The wet weather last week set up a perfect fire storm for diseases on many plants, especially woody shrubs and trees. Starting with roses, we will be seeing blackspot explode on rose leaves. If you've had blackspot before, start spraying. If you are buying new rose plants, only buy those that are resistant to blackspot. You probably need to start spraying every ten to fourteen days. The best fungicides will be tebuconazole, myclobutanil, triticonazole, and chlorothalonil. These are available under many different brand names. It's also helpful to clean up all rose leaves that have fallen and prune out any canes that are heavily diseased. Cedar apple rust galls had already been out with earlier rains and many more appeared last week. If you have susceptible apples or flowering crabs, start treating with myclobutanil on a ten to fourteen day rotation. You will need to continue those sprays thru the end of the month. The rainy weather arrived just in time to hammer a bunch of shade trees with various and sundry leaf diseases. Sycamores and probably a few others are going to get anthracnose. Some may lose all of their leaves. But they will leaf back out and be fine. Elms are likely to start dropping leaves due to leaf blister or taphrina. Green ash will have at least some leaf rust. What you need to remember about these early season leaf diseases is that you don't do anything. Once leaves start to fall you can't do a thing. The infection period is over. It won't do any good to treat them now. More importantly, again, its early in the season and the trees will releaf. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.