

## Hackberry Psyllids

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. If you have hackberry trees then you have probably seen the little bumps on the leaves that they have every year. These bumps are caused by a little insect called the hackberry psyllid. In the bigger scheme of things, the hackberry psyllid doesn't harm the tree. The leaves still continue to work so we don't worry about controlling the psyllids as they are difficult if not impossible to control anyway. But in the fall, the adult psyllids, which look like a small gnat, though they aren't in that insect family, emerge from those galls on the leaves and they start looking for someplace to spend the winter. All too often they end up massing around our houses, often times covering the screens of our doors and windows. Some of them fly in when we come in, some come around the windows or right through the screens and others hitch rides on us as we come inside. Unfortunately coming inside our homes is a poor choice as most of them won't survive the dry winter air in our homes. They'd have been better off staying outside. The psyllids won't do any damage inside our homes, other than annoy us. They don't bite, although their point little legs can stick us when they land on us. Like many nuisance insects, they don't do any damage, they are just a nuisance. Spraying around the house with a garden insecticide will help, some. For those massing on our screens, spraying with an aerosol flying insect killer when there are large numbers will help. But ultimately, just keep the house shut up and hope for cold weather to come along soon and shut 'em down! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

## Taking Down Hummingbird Feeders

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Every year, in late September and early October, I receive phone calls from folks wanting to know when to take their hummingbird feeders down. There is a concern that if they don't take the feeders down, the birds won't migrate south and they'll freeze to death. My response is always to leave the feeder up as long as you want, because the presence or absence of your feeder is not going to cause them to stay or leave. The hummingbird's desire to migrate is driven by other factors, mainly day length. The other concern, that the birds will freeze to death, is also somewhat unfounded. These are not insects. Hummingbirds are warm blooded creatures and do a great job of thermal regulation. Keep in mind that we have hummingbird records, in Kansas, for every month of the year except March. A hummer is more likely to die of starvation in the winter than freeze to death and often the biggest problem is not lack of nectar, but lack of small flying insects that they need for protein source. Southbound hummingbird migration is a slow and meandering sort of thing. We're still seeing a few hummers around and that's about normal. From here the hummingbirds work their way on south, most staying overland and traveling to southern and southwestern Mexico on through Central America but few going much further than extreme northern Panama. But they aren't in a big hurry. They'll move along with flowering plants and most will be gone before it gets too cold. But if it is early November and you still have a hummer at your feeders, please call me!

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## Timing of Weed and Feed

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. When we start talking about fertilizing and controlling broadleaf weeds in the fall I usually encourage homeowners to hold off until the latter half of October so we can get all those little seedling weeds up and growing. By the time we get into late October we've had enough rain to get all those weed seeds germinate and the temperatures are cooling down so no more should be coming. Well, this year I'm a little concerned about this typical timing as we haven't been getting the late September early October rains that I like to see nor is it cooling down very much yet. I was checking some of my usual spots for weed seedlings and I was seeing some, but not as many as I was expecting to see yet. My big concern is that we will get a later germination season and then we'll have a bunch of seeds sprout after you've applied treatment and these won't be controlled by your weed and feed products. So here's what I'm recommending this year. If you have an irrigation system, and have been watering, you can apply your weed and feed at any time. If you haven't been watering, get on your hands and knees and go looking for little weed seedlings. If you see a lot, then get your weed and feed applied, OR wait until later in the month or even into the first half of November. As long as we don't have a snowstorm or temperatures down in the single digits, the weeds and the grass will just keep growing. IF you planted new grass however, hold off on treating for weeds until you've mowed it two to three times and it looks well established! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.