

Late Season Crabgrass Control

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I am seeing a LOT of crabgrass, and foxtail too but I'll just call it all crabgrass, and I've started getting calls from homeowners about all this grass in their yards. Crabgrass is easy to see this time of year - it tends to be sort of light green, sometimes yellowish green, it grows fast and it's shooting up little seed heads that have several long skinny arms covered with seeds. Foxtail has a thick bushy seed head that looks like, well, a foxes tail. Both of these start as seed each spring growing where there is bare soil patches in yards. A good way to reduce the risk is to mow tall and keep your yard thick. If you have a lot of crabgrass now, your choices are limited. You can do nothing other than keep mowing and then go after the crabgrass hard next year with a timely application of a crabgrass preventer. There is one herbicide that will control large crabgrass in tall fescue and bluegrass. It is sold under two different names by Bayer Advanced - look for Bermudagrass Control for Lawns or Crabgrass Killer for lawns. The active ingredient in this is fenoxaprop-p-ethyl. There is another herbicide, quinclorac, that is quite effective on small crabgrass, but not large heading out mature crabgrass. The other thing you can do is work this fall on thickening up your lawn with over seeding, tall mowing heights and fertilization. The thicker and healthier the lawn, the less crabgrass you will have as crabgrass seed wants bare soil and sunshine to germinate. Shaded soil from thick and tall grass is a wonderful crabgrass deterrent! If you aren't sure that you have crabgrass, bring me a sample! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Dividing Iris

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Bearded iris are well suited to Kansas. They tend to be tough, they are pretty reliable for good spring blossoms and they survive our heat and occasional droughts. But they do tend to multiply readily. In the late summer they are semi dormant so it's a good time to divide them, or move them. Carefully dig up the entire clump and remove the dirt. You want to look for thick rhizomes with a good fan of leaves. The ideal situation is to have two small rhizomes attached to a larger rhizome in a Y shape. Each of these rhizomes should have a fan of leaves. Double fans will produce more flowers the first year, but single fans will catch up by the second year. Rhizomes that show insect infestation or soft rot or mechanical damage should be discarded. Once you get all the rhizomes divided, cut the leaves back by two thirds. Then set these aside in a cool dry place where they won't dry out excessively while you get the bed prepared for replanting by removing weeds and grass and fertilizing. Add 1 pound of a 12-12-12 fertilizer per 100 square feet of bed and work into the soil. If you have been fertilizing heavily in recent years you may just skip fertilizing. When replanting, the tops of the rhizomes should be about even with the soil surface and then water the bed down well, possibly also adding a garden weed preventer. If your iris bed is really dry and hard, you may want to thoroughly water it down 4 or 5 days before attempting to dig the rhizomes to begin with. You should plan to divide your iris every 3 to 5 years, but they will bloom for years regardless. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Fall 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. Even though it's the middle of August, there are still crops that you can be planting in your garden. I spend a lot of time talking about fall gardens and I just don't see very many people doing it. But if you enjoy gardening and especially fresh vegetables, planting in late July and August for harvest in late September through October can be just the thing! You need to get some ground worked up and be sure to add a healthy amount of balanced garden fertilizer as the nitrogen has probably been pretty well leached out of the soil with all the rains we've had since late July. The ground is warm and the seeds will sprout and grow quickly - but so will the weeds so use mulch and be aggressive with the weeding so that the weeds don't get ahead of you. Once you have the garden crops up and growing you can apply a garden weed preventer to a weed free area to help reduce the weed pressure. If we hit a short dry spell after planting, keep the soil moist to get those veggies up and growing quickly. Several root crops and leafy vegetables can be planted at this time. It may be a little late for potatoes, but if you have the space go ahead and try - what have you got to lose? There's definitely time for beets, carrots, turnips and radishes - in fact radish and turnip can be planted to about the 10th of September. Lettuce can be planted now as can spinach and swiss chard if you hurry. And if you really want a little bit more of a challenge - try a hill or two of summer squash. Watch out for squash bugs and be aggressive with insecticide treatments if needed. Then enjoy your veggies into fall! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Recommended Fescue Varieties

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Just about this time of year homeowners routinely start planning for some overseeding or new seeding of their lawns, which then frequently prompts the question of what grass seed should they buy? What is the one best turfgrass variety that they should be planting? Ironically, to be bluntly honest, most of the big name company packages with names like Sunny Mix or Dense Shade Mix or Quick Lawn or names like that, should be avoided. There are many lawn grass varieties out there and most of them are simply not well adapted to our climate here in Kansas. If you are planting a lawn in Kansas in September, you need to be looking at Kentucky bluegrass or tall fescue. Period. You don't want perennial ryegrass or creeping red fescue or any other fescue at all, only tall fescue. While many of these will in fact germinate and grow quickly or have a very fine and lush looking plant, they simply will not hold up under general weather conditions in Kansas. When I'm seeding or overseeding a lawn I'm going to go with a bluegrass or tall fescue blend that has 4 to 6 different cultivars in it. I want a mix of cultivars to take advantage of the strengths of several different cultivars. I also try to find a blend that was put together here in Kansas. I can get you a list of the latest race horse cultivars, but that list changes from one year to the next. There are many good improved tall fescues that are far superior to good old K-31 tall fescue. You can still get and use K-31, but there are so many better choices for lawns. Plant in early September, mow tall 3 to 3.5" and enjoy! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Fertilizing Strawberries

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Strawberries are one of the most popular small fruits that home gardeners regularly grow. Raspberries, blackberries and gooseberries have varying degrees of followings. Blueberries, while popular, are not well suited to our climate, but strawberries, well very few people don't like strawberries and they are well suited to our climate. They are hardy, productive and seem to withstand our crazy climate and produce a crop every year. But it does take a couple of years to get them well established and then a little tough love every year to keep the bed productive and not over crowded. The next several weeks are very important to the strawberry plant. As the hours of daylight shorten up and the weather cools, fruit buds for next year's crop develop. To get the plant geared up to develop those flower buds the plants need to be fertilized and well watered at this time. Nitrogen is the key nutrient needed but you can use just about any nitrogen containing fertilizer. You want to apply $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ pound of nitrogen per 100 foot of row, which could be interpreted as about 150 square feet as many strawberry beds don't really have rows after a couple of years. For a balanced fertilizer like 12-12-12, that would be $5\frac{1}{2}$ pounds per 100 row feet. For ammonium sulfate 3 pounds per 100 row feet and for urea, $1\frac{1}{2}$ pounds. Not common around here but if you have a sandy soil you may want to increase rates by about 50%. After spreading the fertilizer you want to water it in fairly soon with about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of irrigation if it doesn't rain in about 24 hours. Nitrogen can volatilize in warm weather. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.