

Squash Bugs

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Squash bugs are a true bug with a piercing sucking mouthpart that will destroy your pumpkin and squash plants, especially squash of the summer variety. Winter squash seem to have at least some resistance to squash bugs. Squash bugs are grey and shield shaped. One of the challenges with them is that as adults, like most true bugs, they are difficult to control with insecticides. Squash bugs generally have two generations per year. The first generation isn't very big and is often overlooked, or gardeners don't get too excited because they are just seeing a few bugs. Well, right now the first generation is in process and now is actually the time to start treating while those first generation nymphs are still fairly easy to control. If you don't get to work on it now, the second generation will flat out overwhelm your squash plants and you. Many gardeners want to use some powdered insecticide that they can dust over the tops of the plants. The problem though is that most squash bugs are on the undersides of the leaves AND you have to get the insecticide directly on them. Even if you aren't seeing very many or any squash bugs, I would start treating regularly now using a liquid spray that you can get on the top and bottoms of the leaves. We used to use a lot of Sevin for squash bugs, but I just wouldn't depend on it anymore. Use a product containing permethrin, malathion or mehtoxychlor. Read the label but generally we need to be treating about once a week if you have any hope of keeping squash bugs under control through the summer! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Spraying Weeds in the Summer

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 certain weeds that we want to or need to spray during the summer months. While I understand the necessity of this, you need to use great care to get good control without jeopardizing the health of desirable plants in your landscape. For weeds to be effectively controlled, they need to be actively growing. If you have extremely drought or heat stressed plants consider NOT treating them as they probably will not be effectively controlled as they aren't carrying on with normal physiological processes due to the drought stress. Some herbicides, especially the dandelion killer types with active ingredients like 2,4-D, dicamba and MCPP will release vapors that can cause injury to sensitive ornamental plants. You should only use these when winds are calm and temperatures are below 85 degrees and will be for several hours. My rule of thumb is that if you can easily smell the herbicide in these weed killers, you'll probably curl a few leaves somewhere and tomatoes, redbuds, grapes and walnuts are the most likely victims. Other herbicides like glyphosate, roundup, grass killers generally are non-volatile products that don't have vapors that can cause these problems, but they still should only be used on actively growing weeds. I would still prefer that these be used in cooler weather with calm winds to encourage good uptake by the weeds. As always, read and follow all the label directions. Remember, those directions are not just good advice, they are the law that dictates how those herbicides will and will not be used. Be sure to follow them! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Grub Control in Lawns

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Right behind crabgrass, grubs in their lawn is probably the biggest fear of many homeowners. To be right honest, far more grub treatments are applied annually to yards than there are yards with grub problems. Grubs, or white grubs, are the larval form of any one of a number of scarab beetles that we collectively call June beetles. Some of these species have one year life cycles, some have several year life cycles. One thing that they all have in common is that most species lay eggs in June or early July so we traditionally have applied grub insecticides in late July to control them when they are small. Historically we relied on Sevin or Dylox to control grubs. These had fairly short residual control so we needed to wait to put them on until the little grubs were active. In recent years we have switched over to products like Merit and GrubEx with different insecticides that are less water soluble but last much longer. We tend to put these products down in April thru June. Honestly though, I feel we are better off to wait until we know we have a problem. If you do have a problem show up from here on into August, you are probably better off using a product with Sevin or carbaryl.

Whatever you use, you need to water the lawn first to get grubs up closer to the surface. Then apply your product, either as a liquid or a granular and water it in with ½ to 1 inch of irrigation or rainfall. My rule of thumb on grub treatments is that if you don't have at least ½ inch of rain within 48 hours, get the product watered in to get it activated and working. And now is a good time to treat!

This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Japanese Beetles

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. 100 years ago this summer, in a small nursery in New Jersey, the very first Japanese beetles were discovered in the US. Japanese beetles, naturally native to Japan, are a scarab beetle, in the same huge family as our native May and June beetles. Japanese beetles are smaller than most of our June beetles, basically not quite a ½ inch long. They have an overall metallic greenish cast with coppery wing covers. Right along the side of their abdomen is a row of white spots. Once established in an area they can become a damaging pest with the grubs attacking the roots of over 200 plant species and the adults, which are quite gregarious in nature, stripping leaves. They can be a real pest! Fortunately for us, like many scarab beetles, they are weak and clumsy fliers so their spread west has been slow. A few years ago we found the first ones here in Geary County but so far they've only been singles. That changed on Monday of last week when an area gardener sent me a photo of their tomato plant with numerous Japanese beetles on the upper foliage. They are now a pest, although many of you may not see them in your garden for another ten years. When they are disturbed, they tend to fold up their legs, fall to the ground and play dead. This makes it very handy to go out first thing in the morning and knock them into a bucket of soapy water where they will die. If you prefer not to take this approach they are controlled by any one of a number of garden insecticides. I would use the pyrethroids as they give longer period of protection. Most damage will be done with by mid August. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm

Chuck Otte.

Leaf Scorch

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Plants stay cool in the heat of summer by taking water from the roots, passing it up through the tree and then passing it out of their leaves as water vapor through tiny openings called stomata. Not all plants have the same ability to cool themselves. When the weather is really hot, some plants will shut their stomata down or curl up the leaves to slow down how fast the water vapor is lost. If conditions are droughty plants wilt to indicate that they are short on soil moisture. For a wide variety of sometimes complex reasons, sometimes plants can't move enough water to keep themselves cool. The ground may not be wet enough. The root system may be compromised or damaged to the point it can't take up enough water. Or the plant may not be appropriate for the environment it is in because it simply can not move enough water to keep up with the demand. Regardless of the reason when the plant can not move enough water, we can develop a physiological condition called scorch. Scorch shows up as dead tissue between the veins of the leaf. Edges of leaves may turn black and then the death works it's way deeper into the leaf. Affected leaves often fall off. Maples are especially prone to showing leaf scorch, especially under the weather conditions we have seen this summer. To reduce the risk of scorch, which most plants do survive, choose your plant materials carefully. Then for trees just a few years old, soak the ground well once per week. With older trees, every two to three weeks during periods of no or little rainfall. Use an open hose running slow for this. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.