

Sweet Corn Confusion

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. In the good old days we had sweet corn. That was it, just sweet corn. But that wasn't good enough for the plant breeders. They wanted more sweet. Well it isn't that simple today, as we seem to have alphabet soup when it comes to sweet corn. Standard original sweet corn goes by the genetic designation of su for the sugary gene that it contains. It needs to be isolated from all other corns and sweet corns by at least 200 to 250 feet difference or two weeks difference in maturity. You don't want to plant these until you have soil temperatures of 55 degrees. The sugary genes take the place of some of the starch genes and so the seedlings aren't as hardy. Honey and cream and Silver Queen are a couple of good su varieties. Supersweet is known as sh2 but have the drawback of having tougher kernels and less true corn flavor. They need to be isolated and not planted until soil temperatures are 65 degrees. Candy Store and Florida Staysweet are a couple of examples. Probably the most popular sweet corn now days is the sugar enhanced or se varieties. These have better cold tolerance, 60 degree soil temps, hold sweetness longer but not as long as the sh2's but do have better corn flavor and tender kernels AND do not have to be isolated other than from supersweets, sh2's. Suggested sugar enhanced include Bodacious, Ambrosia, Sweet temptation, delectable and miracle. There's also a new type called Triplesweet that blends all the others. The jury is still out on these and we aren't real sure what to recommend but you may want to try Serendipity, Polka, Avalon or Frisky! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Field Bindweed Control

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Field bindweed is a vining perennial weed from the Caucus region of Asia that according to some fairly solid legend, came over with the first Turkey Red wheat. It climbs up fences, and spreads out in grassy areas. It has medium sized ovate to oblong leaves and a pretty white trumpet shaped flower that is often a very delicate pink when it first opens. It is incredibly deeply rooted, very aggressive and a challenge to control. The roots of well established plants can go down 15 to 20 feet and spread out 20 to 30 feet. BUT, it can be controlled. Because of the massive root system it is going to take a few years to truly get it under control. In gardens I would restrict my control efforts to glyphosate, which is sold under many different names. Carefully spot spray individual vines pulling them away from desirable vegetation. Glyphosate is non-selective and you want to be careful not to get overspray onto desirable plants. Let vines get at least a foot long before treating and treatment will be most effective when it starts blooming. In lawn areas, fall treatments with any of the dandelion type killers will work well, in fact fall treatments probably offer the best control options in turf. To make control even better, get one of the broadleaf weed herbicides that also has the herbicide quinclorac in it. These are often labeled as lawn weed control with crabgrass control, but not all crabgrass control products contain quinclorac so read the fine print. Do not use quinclorac where you'll be planting flowers or garden plants as it can have some soil residual activity for many months. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Hail damage on garden plants and flowers

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Last year we got by pretty easy on severe thunderstorm weather. We had a lot of rain but not many severe storms. Already this year we've had several rounds of heavy rain, wind and of course hail. Any or all of these can cause there on problems in garden and ornamental bed plants. Hail, even small hail can really shred leaves of plants like hostas, rhubarb or hollyhocks. Often the biggest mistake we make is to go out right after the storm, or the next morning to inspect the damage. Everything looks horrible and we feel compelled to do SOMETHING. Other than to move limbs that blew down in any wind off of plants, the next thing you need to do is go back inside the house and have another cup of coffee. Here's what you need to keep in mind. Much of this damage is cosmetic, especially if all you are seeing is shredded leaves. The leaves are often still going to carry on photosynthesis which provides the critical food these plants need to regenerate new leaves which they will do in pretty short order! Once new foliage comes out you can removed the old ratty looking foliage. If you have annuals that are stripped and beaten down to a green stub, you may have to replant. But if there are active buds and even one leaf, you may be better off just waiting and letting it come out of it on it's own. The same thing goes for trees. They've been well watered by the rain. Rake up the leaves out of the yard if they bother you, but that's about all you really need to do. You see, Mother Nature can often do just fine without all of our fussing around trying to make it better!

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