

Ice Damage To Trees

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Mother Nature is tough on our plants. Wind and especially ice are two that can be particularly devastating to our trees and to a lesser extent our shrubs. One of the most important things for homeowners to do, and one of the hardest, is to do nothing during the actual ice storm. As ice accumulates on tree branches they will start weighing lower and lower with greater freezing precipitation. There is a natural inclination of many homeowners to go out and try to knock some of this ice off. DON'T! Trees have amazing ability to bend and absorb the weight of ice and snow. If you start trying to go around and knock ice off, you can actually start causing branches to break. If it's a small branch that breaks it may be no big deal, but if it is a large branch, you could be putting yourself in danger from large falling branches. You really need to just wait until after the storm to do anything. After the storm first check to make sure that there aren't any lines of any kind in the tree. We don't need people getting electrocuted! Then start gathering up limbs that are on the ground. Get those out of the way. Branches that are fully broken off can be removed from under the tree to make it safer to work. Limbs that are fully detached but within easy reach from the ground can be carefully removed. Limbs that are still partially attached should not be pulled on as you can start ripping bark and causing even more damage. Beyond that you may very well have to wait a few months and get a licensed arborist in to do some corrective pruning or tree removal. In the meantime stay safe! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Caddo Sugar Maple

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Every fall we bemoan the fact that we don't have a lot of trees that have that extravagant fall foliage. Part of the reason for that is that many of the trees that give us the brilliant reds and oranges just do not grow well here. Red maples can be absolutely stunning, but red maples, while heavily planted, don't really like our Kansas weather, especially summertime weather, nor are they that fond of our soils. Red maples do have a medium to fast growth rate which is why many people like them. Sugar maples are well known for their gorgeous orange fall foliage. Sugar maples tend to be slower growing than red maples, although there are some tricks to get you around that. Historically we have had to be careful where we put sugar maples as they tend to get hammered by the southwest summer winds which causes the leaves to be scorched and tattered. However, there is a cultivar of sugar maple that was found several decade ago growing naturally in Caddo county Oklahoma, southwest of Oklahoma City. This isolated population seemed to thrive in the hot dry weather there and was very tolerant to clay soils. Selections have been made of what is now known as a Caddo Sugar Maple and are available in the trade. Don't go to the nursery and ask for a Caddo Maple though. You will need to look for an Autumn Splendor maple or a John Pair maple. Autumn Splendor has a traditional sugar maple style of growth, John Pair is smaller and more compact. Neither one will do well in a heavy clay soil that is frequently wet so put it outside the automatic sprinkler zone! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Indoor lighting for gardeners

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Recent years have seen a lot of changes in light sources for indoor gardeners. Traditional fluorescent lights were long our main stay. They produced a nice balanced light, were cost and energy effective and did a great job for starting young vegetable and flower plants under. LEDs are making huge inroads into the lighting world and will probably replaced fluorescents in coming years but right now they may be a little bit pricey and researchers are still figuring out which wavelengths will work best so for the next few years you probably want to stick with the fluorescent lights. Fluorescent lights are measure by length, and diameter. The tube bulbs we used for years were called T-12s meaning that they were 12/8ths of an inch in diameter or 1½ inches. T12s are slowly fading away and are being replaced by T8s and T5s. T8s are one inch in diameter and T5s are 5/8 of an inch in diameter. They are not interchangeable in light fixtures however. Older fixtures will have to use T12s. Newer fixtures may be able to use T8s or T12s but T5s have to have a T5 fixture. T8s are similarly priced to T12s, but T5s still tend to run a little more expensive. The good news is that the smaller bulbs generally use less energy and provide as much or more light intensity. The newer T8s and T5s also last longer so while there may be a slightly higher cost to purchase, you don't have to replace them as often. Remember, light bulb intensity is not measured in watts - that's how much energy it uses - but in lumens. Make sure that when you are buying bulbs, you look at the lumens! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

All America Selections - Vegetables

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Just when the darkest days of winter are upon us, gardeners spirits are brightened and hope returns in the form of the annual announcement of the All American Selections for new flowers and vegetable varieties. They have a great website - to get there just type all america selections into your favorite internet search engine. Today we're going to talk about some of the vegetable winners and tomorrow some of the flower winners.

These are evaluated all across the country so should do well in most of our area although sometimes it may be tricky to find sources of the seeds or plants. This year there are 8 vegetables so obviously we can't say much about any of them. Fennel is unfamiliar to many area gardeners but is an interesting plant. Fennel Antares is the first winner. As Fennel is in the carrot family it is also a good pollinator plant, especially for black swallowtail butterfly larvae. Okra Candle Fire is a red okra with round, not ribbed pods. Very maintenance free it is also a heavy producer. Pea Patio Pride may be a good short season pea that you can grow in pots on your patio. Pepper Mad Hatter is a different pepper than what most folks will think. It is a sweet pepper with a unique shape. Winter Honeybaby is a winter squash looking similar to butternut but growing on a compact plant. Watermelon Mini Love is a personal sized Asian watermelon. Another compact plant it has very high sugar content. We'll end up with 2 tomatoes Chef's Choice Yellow is a yellow beefsteak tomato that grows on large vines and Patio Choice Yellow is a cherry tomato type! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

All America Selections - Flowers

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Lets get right into our All America 2017 flower selections this morning where we have 8 winners. Celosia Asian Garden has beautiful pink spikes with good branching for lots of blossoms that hold their pink color well. Dianthus Interspecific Supra Pink is a variagated light and dark pink flowered compact bushy plant that should bloom from spring through fall! Geranium Calliope Medium Dark Red is a dark red version of our classic geranium. It has zonal type flowers and foliage in a mounded semi spreading growth habit with strong stems. This geranium will work well in containers, hanging baskets on in-ground flower beds. Penstemon barbatus Twizzle Purple is a very interesting penstemon reminding me in some ways as more of a salvia. This is a tall plant, nearly three feet tall, so a good way to add some height in a flower bed and also as a good plant for pollinators. Verbena Endurascape Pink Bicolor has gorgeous pink flowers deeping to a near violet color towards the center of the bloom. It is called endurascape because it has excellent heat and drought tolerance as well as cold temperature tolerance. Zinnia Profusion Red is a single flowered zinnia with deep red petals. Let's end up with two Vincas from the same line, Mega Bloom Orchid Halo and Pink Halo. These are bred to withstand heat and humidity without succumbing to disease. They maintain a nice dense habit with flowers staying on top of the foliage. Both have white eyes fading to a nice full pink or a deep orchidy violet. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.