

## Green June Beetles

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Green June Beetles have been increasing in recent years. Their presence can be unsettling to many folks. While they often make a loud buzzing noise when they fly, they aren't bumblebees or a giant bee from you know where. They are a green June beetle and yes I know it's July. Their arrival is right on time. They are strong flyers but rather clumsy flyers. They'll fly right into you, or your house or your pets. Like all scarab beetles, yes they are a scarab, the larval form is a grub in the ground, albeit a rather large grub. With most June beetles, or scarabs, the larva or grub does the majority of the damage eating roots off of plants like grass. While the green June beetle will feed on grass they will also feed on decaying tree roots. Unlike other June beetles, the green June beetle grub will sometimes come to the surface and feed on the above ground portions of the turf plant. They can leave mounds of soil 2 to 3 inches across. They may also leave a large thumb sized hole in the ground, especially when the adults emerge in late June and July. Now, unlike other June beetles, the adults of the green June beetle can be quite damaging. They seem to be very fond of feeding on ripening fruit, especially things like peaches. In the south they are often called fig eaters! They seem to be highly attracted to over ripe fruit so be sure to keep windfalls picked up off the ground. If they are attacking developing fruit you can treat with sevin or just about any of the standard insecticides that are registered for use on fruit, but you need to get the spray directly on them! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

## All Plant, No Fruit

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Gardeners sometimes go a bit overboard. I know that's hard to believe but I've seen it happen in many different ways. Sometimes they try to squeeze too much into a garden spot and they end up getting frustrated because produce is small and it is hard to work in the garden. Other times they go overboard on fertilizer. My favorite story was from over 30 years ago when the gardener dumped a whole bag of urea fertilizer on his garden. Keep in mind that this was a small garden and most times we recommend 1 pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet of garden space and maybe do that up to 3 times a year. The fertilization rate for his garden came out to be about 23 pounds of nitrogen per 1000 sq feet. The rate was so high that most of his plants were dying. That's the excessive to extreme. It was about three years before normal garden plants could be grown there again. So let's back off and talk about what happens when you go a little bit overboard on fertilization. The biggest problem that I run into is when too much nitrogen is applied and we get a nitrogen phosphorus imbalance. Nitrogen is crucial for vegetative growth. Nitrogen is what puts the green into the plants. Phosphorus is crucial for root development but also flower and fruit production and development. Low phosphorus ratios and you have few flowers and little to no fruit. We occasionally see the ten foot tall tomato plant with hardly any tomatoes. To avoid this, soil test at the start of the season, only add what you need and only add the amount that is recommended. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

## Walnut Toxicity

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I had a phone call recently from a home gardener with tomato problems. Okay I thought as I picked up the phone, it's going to be blossom end rot or septoria leaf blight. So the gardener started telling me what was going wrong with their tomatoes. The tomatoes were growing very well, but then they would start to wilt and eventually die. She planted them the second week of May, they were modern day hybrids and she had a three year rotation so tomatoes were in a location only once every three years. Well, we've taken out cold weather shock, we've taken out fusarium and verticillium wilt as culprits as she rotates and uses resistant cultivars. I asked if other plants in the garden were being affected. No, just the tomatoes. Were any herbicides sprayed near the garden? Nope, and the fact that other plants weren't affected confirmed this and the fact that the tomatoes were wilting but not showing distorted growth. So then I asked, is there a walnut tree near the garden? Yes, there was a walnut tree very near the garden and several roots were encountered during tilling and planting. Ding, ding ding - we have a winner. Walnuts release a compound called jugalone into the ground. This compound is designed to reduce plant competition so the walnut has an advantage in growth. It just so happens that tomatoes are highly sensitive to jugalone. The tree had gotten big enough and the root system extensive enough that it was now impacting the tomatoes. If you are establishing a garden you should always stay as far away from walnut trees as you possibly can!

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## Brown Patch of lawns

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Many people are quick to want to claim that they have some disease that is killing their lawn or making it look less attractive or something. Many lawn companies are also quick to want to sell you a lawn fungicide treatment, most of the time which isn't needed. We do have one fairly common disease, especially on tall fescue, which is called brown patch. Under severe cases brown patch can actually kill plants, but most of the time it just knocks the leaves off the top. There are a lot of fungicide applications made, but often these are being made when the real problem is the management of the turf. Brown patch is so common because the disease spores are everywhere. If you go outside in the morning, the lawn is covered with dew and the temperatures are in the high 60s or especially in the 70s, and this happens every morning for a week or so, you probably will see brown patch. It loves wet leaf surfaces and warm overnight temperatures. The number one way to reduce the risk of brown patch is to minimize how long leaves stay wet. We seldom see severe brown patch in non-irrigated lawns. Severe cases are always in irrigated lawns. Do not water in the evening, water in the early morning hours. Set those sprinklers to come on at 3 in the morning and turn off by 9 or 10 in the morning. Then only water 2 days a week or every three days. Reduce the amount of total fertilizer your lawn gets and especially don't apply summer fertilization if having a brown patch problem. Remember, fungicides can't cure a disease, they can only stop it from spreading! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

## Feeding Hummingbirds

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Southbound hummingbird migration is getting underway. This is about the best time of the year to make sure that you have a hummingbird feeder out where you and your family can watch it. Hummingbird numbers will continue to increase through early September and then start to dwindle as we get towards the end of the month. A few hummingbirds will linger into early October. Each time we have a cold front and the wind switches to the north we can expect a new wave of hummers to arrive. Feeding hummingbirds is really quite simple. Get yourself a hummingbird feeder - there are many inexpensive feeders for under \$10. Find a location 4 to 8 feet off the ground where you can easily reach it and where it is easily seen from your house. You don't need to buy the premixes or the concentrates for your feeder, just get some granulated sugar and mix one part sugar with four parts water. You don't have to boil it but warm water will help the sugar go into solution easier. Once the sugar is all dissolved, fill the feeder, hang it up and wait for the show to begin. Just a few considerations - you don't need red dye in the water, in fact hummingbirds are probably better off without it. NEVER use honey or artificial sweeteners, just sugar. You don't have to fill your feeder completely full. You want to change the solution every few days so start out filling it about half full. If they start emptying it in less than a day, you can fill it fuller. Then leave the feeder up until well into fall - no need to be in a hurry to take it down. If you have any questions, call me! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.