

Gardening with Chuck Programs for August 10 - 16, 2020

Virus Problems in Peppers

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I've seen a lot of funny looking peppers this year. By funny looking I mean plants with distorted and twisted leaves. Not herbicide drift twisted and distorted but viral disease distorted. Peppers are related to tomatoes and as such they can get a lot of the same virus diseases. Tobacco mosaic virus and cucumber mosaic virus are long known and common but there are many others. Viruses can get transmitted in many different ways anytime from the greenhouse where they were grown right to your garden. There's no way to cure a plant once it has a virus. If it's a mild case you can sometimes let it go but severely infected plants need to be removed and burned or thrown in the trash as certain chewing insects can transmit the virus from one plant to another. Fruit on these is still safe to eat. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Diseases or Mites

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Sometimes we think we know what's wrong with a plant and treat with an insecticide or fungicide but with no luck in curing the issue. Spider mite issues can sometimes look a lot like leaf diseases. We become use to seeing leaves eaten up by insects and when a leaf just starts to change appearance but is still wholly intact we think we have a disease. Spider mites have a piercing sucking mouthpart. They hang out on the undersides of leaves and suck sap out of those leaves which results in many little dead spots on the top side of the leaf. As the feeding continues leaves can look worse and worse and finally die. A fungicide is not going to help this as it's not a disease at all. To check for mites hold a blank piece of paper under the leaf and tap the leaf on it. Mites will fall off and start moving on the paper. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Don't Fertilize Warm Season Grasses Now

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Warm season grasses like Bermuda, Zoysia or Buffalograss start growing in late April and go dormant in September. We fertilize them from early May to early August because that's when they are doing most of their growth. We fertilize cool season grasses in the fall for the same reason - it's when they are doing most of their growing. For this year it is now time to stop fertilizing warm season grasses. Fertilizing the latter part of August or September may stimulate these grasses as they are trying to shut down for the season and that may predispose them to winter injury because they can't go dormant properly. If you have a warm season grass lawn just put away your fertilizer spreaders and remember that from here on when you hear us talking about weed and feed treatments, we're talking cool season! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Peony Leaf Issues

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I don't know about your peonies but mine are looking pretty sad right now. Some of them have been hit hard with powdery mildew, which causes the leaves to look gray and powdery. A lot of my peonies have been hit hard with the leaf spot disease we call peony measles. While they look really sad right now, I don't want you to waste time or money trying to treat for these. Anytime after mid August peonies have pretty well shut down and it's safe to cut them back. I didn't get mine cut back in a timely manner last fall which resulted in all sorts of dead leaf material being left around the peony bed to reinfect this year. Sometime around Labor day I'll carefully cut the plants off at the base and throw the tops in the burn pile. Remember, don't mow them off as that scatters disease bearing leaves, cut and remove. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Killing Existing Lawns Before Reseeding

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. If you are thinking that you need to renovate your lawn this fall or even just overseed it, and right now most of what you are seeing is crabgrass, foxtail, and other such weeds, You may want to just kill off the worst looking areas with glyphosate so you've got a seedbed without a lot of competition. Glyphosate leaves no residual in the soil but can take 10 to 14 days to totally kill off everything growing. If you treat now it gives you time to retreat areas that may not have totally died off. Then you can mow it low to remove some of that dead material. Then rent a power seeder in September and just plant right back into that dead vegetation. Then remember, regardless of what cool season grass you have, mow it tall, 3 to 3½ inches. Mowing short is the leading cause of crabgrass invasions in lawns! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.