

Gardening with Chuck Programs for August 3 - 9, 2020

Tired Looking Trees

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. As I was driving into town the other day I noticed that a lot of the trees in the native timber were developing that late summer look. Leaves that a month ago were nice dark green are getting a bronzy or grayish cast to them. They just don't look as verdant as they did in June. This is actually pretty common and I see it in landscape trees too. If you walk up to these trees and start turning leaves over you'll likely notice that they are loaded with small insects, like lace bugs and plant bugs. These insects build up huge numbers as they suck sap out of the leaves leaving little dead spots on the upper sides of the leaf that give that faded and tired look. It may look bad, but the tree is okay. It's already stored up plenty of food reserves for winter. No treatment is needed plus the insects serve as protein for hummingbirds! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Euonymous Scale

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I've seen several euonymous shrubs with bad infestations of euonymous scale in recent weeks.

Euonymous scale looks like thousands of tiny little hard white things have attached to the leaves and stalks of the euonymous plant. The scales are an insect that simply aren't very mobile. They hatch from eggs, crawl a short distance, stick their mouthpart in the plant, start to suck sap and as they do they develop a hard shell over their back. The crucial treatment time is May through early June when they are vulnerable. You can try a couple of treatments now but if a shrub is badly infested it may be best to just remove it. If you have one shrub badly infested the scales are likely going to be on other euonymous in your landscape. Plan to treat your euonymous next year in May and June with a pyrethroid insecticide. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Heat Impacts on Tomatoes

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Tomatoes have a love hate relationship with heat. They really do tolerate heat well, given adequate but not too much water. But two things can happen when temperatures get into the mid to upper 90s on too many occasions. High temperatures, especially early in the summer, will prevent flowers from setting fruit. They'll just drop off. Secondly, at this time of year, when temperatures are above 95 degrees, the red pigments that normally develop as the tomato matures, simply don't form properly. Orange and yellow skinned varieties are less affected by this. A tomato that's normally red will be orange. Luckily we've had cooler weather lately which has helped, but if it heats back up, here's what you do. Once those tomatoes start to develop color, just pick them and bring them inside, they'll be fine! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Dividing Iris

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Bearded iris are a tough perennial flowering plant well suited to Kansas. But they periodically need to be dug up, divided and replanted to avoid overcrowding or just to expand a flower bed. Right now is a great time to do that up through about the middle of August. Dig up your iris and then start to cut them apart with a sharp knife. Ideally you want a Y shaped rhizome with two fans of foliage on small rhizomes attached to a larger rhizome. Discard any rhizomes that appear to have soft rot or just look funky. Replant into a weed free seed bed that has been worked up and fertilized as per a soil test. Iris don't need or like to be buried too deep. Cut the leaves back by two-thirds and plant them with the top of the rhizome just below the soil surface. Water them down good perhaps after applying a weed preventer. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Mimosa Webworms

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Anyone that has honeylocust trees has probably noticed that there are a lot of brown leaves up in there and they look like they are all matted together. I talked about them last week and I'm going to talk about them again! In fact, you can see it all over the area. This is the mimosa webworm. The first generation is about through feeding which means a second generation will be cranking up any day now. The damage looks bad and often those leaves that are all stuck together with webbing don't fall off the tree easily in the fall which makes them even more unsightly. So here are two things to remember. The damage ultimately isn't that serious. Secondly, you need multiple treatments with high pressure to do any good. If you have a small tree that's easily sprayed, spray it. Otherwise, never mind! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.