

## Gardening Tips for December 2 - 8, 2013

Time to stop.....

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. November was cold, much colder than recent years. I'm still working the numbers but let's just say that November was COLD! What that means then is that some things that we may have typically still been able to do in early December, we might as well forget about. Let's start with lawn weed control. Given the number of days that we had temperatures down in the teens, even if those little weeds look green, they aren't actively growing and thereby weed control isn't an option. Even if we get days above 50 degrees during December, weed control just isn't going to be very successful. I'm going to be playing around with some treatments in my experimental plots, i.e. my lawn, and I'll report on those next spring. Likewise, grass seeding is not recommended at this time. While we can do dormant season seeding, we've already had frost in the ground and it is going to be tricky to insure good penetration by any seeders let along the seed itself. You might as well just wait until March now. If there isn't frost in the ground you can still plant trees and shrubs and even spring flowering bulbs if you still have some to plant. Surprisingly, it isn't too early to start pruning fruit trees. Just make sure you pick a day when the temperature is above freezing. This is as much to prevent damage to the plants as it is for your own personal comfort. If you have peach trees you can also start treating for peach leaf curl already, again assuming that the temperature is above freezing and will stay there for a couple of hours. I always prefer it to be at least 50 degrees. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

## Poinsettia's, Again

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I talked about poinsettias a couple of weeks ago and even though you were listening, I know a few of you are now thinking to yourself, what was it that Chuck said about poinsettias? I should mention that we do have a really good bulletin on poinsettias and it is also available online. Just Google poinsettia Kansas State and it should be one of the first couple of hits that come up. Not only does the bulletin cover all that I'm about to tell you, it also covers the history of the poinsettia and what you have to do next fall to make it bloom again, if you can keep it alive. The key to keeping a poinsettia looking good is keep it away from high or low temperature extremes and then keep the soil moist without drowning it. That's all there is to it. If the temperature is below 50 degrees when you buy your poinsettia, get it wrapped in paper to protect it going to your car, then take it right home and inside before you unwrap it. Locate it where it gets some sunlight, if possible, but not near a door where it gets cold air drafts nor right over or under a furnace vent or too near to a wood stove or fireplace. All of these extremes will shorten bloom life. Most poinsettias come from the store with the pot wrapped in that nice shiny foil. Make sure you have a saucer to set the pot in and then punch holes in that foil so water can drain out. Then check the potting soil daily and water when it feels dry to the touch. If a poinsettia wilts it will lose its leaves. If the soil becomes waterlogged it will quickly develop root rot and die. As to what to do with it after Christmas - read the bulletin or toss it out. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

## Safety with holiday greenery

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Christmas is a,very green holiday. Now by green, I'm not necessarily talking environmentally green but just lots of green color, especially foliage. Now days there's some very good artificial greenery that unless you're right on it, you won't be sure if it's real or not. The great thing about this artificial greenery is that it can be used for several years. But it's still hard to beat the look, the feel and the smell of real greenery around the holidays. We've already talked about real Christmas trees and with trees we have the advantage that we can water them and slow down the drying out process. But for all other manners of greenery, those wreaths, swags and whatever else, they are going to dry out and dry out fast! As I've often said, dried evergreen greenery is a Roman candle looking for a match! So naturally you want to keep this stuff away from heat and open flames. Nothing makes me more nervous than to see natural greenery on a fireplace mantle or used as greenery around real candles. Which next brings up the point that there are some very good artificial candles that yuse LEDs that can look pretty darn real. If you want to use real greenery, consider using one of these faux candles. Wreaths on the outside of a door don't worry me too much, but for all that other greenery inside your home, please limit how long you keep it in the house. If you are going to have several events consider laying in a supply and replace it keeping the new stuff in a cool climate to help prolong it's freshness. I want you to have a good holiday season, but a safe one!

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