

Time to Start Gearing up the Garden

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. With all the cold weather we've had this spring, it's been hard to get thinking much about the vegetable garden. It's been cold, things are warming up slowly, but there's a lot of stuff we can be planting now, or at least very soon. No it is still too early for those warm weather crops like tomatoes, corn, beans and vine crops, but we are getting closer! But for early to mid April there's a lot we can be planting. There's still time to plant cool weather crops like cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, even potatoes and peas. The only risk is if May shoots up into the 90s really fast. But at this time we can start adding a lot of other crops. Collards and chard, carrots, another planting of lettuce, radishes - but hurry, onions - both plants and sets, peas I've already mentioned but they can be planted almost into May, spinach and beets. This assumes that your garden plot is ready to go. I've talked to some gardeners who need to till their garden once more and it's too wet. Any rain we get is going to slow things down and remember the cardinal rule - never, ever work wet soil! The flip side of that is that if you are ready to plant, the mere act of making a furrow and seeding into it can dry the soil out so a light watering after planting may be in order to insure quicker germination. Also remembering that it is kind of cool, use a good starter fertilizer with good amounts of phosphorus. One trick is to make the furrow a little deeper than you'd need, lay down a band of starter fertilizer, partially fill it in with soil to the right depth for planting and then plant over it. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Gearing up for Lawncare

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. The lawn season has been somewhat slow getting started this year, but it's cranking up now! First and foremost, if you haven't already and especially if you've had problems in the past, get your crabgrass preventer applied now. If you've had problems with puncturevine or grass sandburs in recent years, make sure you apply preventer in these area also. It may not stop them all, but it'll reduce what you have to deal with later on. Remember though that you need a quarter to a half inch of rain or equivalent irrigation after application to get that weed barrier activated! If you have overseeding or reseeding that needs to be done however, do not apply a preventer. It'll work just great at preventing your fescue or bluegrass seed from growing also. If you do need to do some seeding, it's time to get with it. We need that seed in the ground no later than about May 10th. If you've got a few blooming weeds in your yard, take a few minutes to spot spray and then make it a point to treat in mid to late October next fall so you don't have those problems next spring. Finally, make sure your lawn mower is set tall. I prefer a cutting height of 3 inches on bluegrass and 3½ inches on fescue. Mowing shorter than this robs your grass plants of necessary food producing leaf area, opens up the turf to more weed invasion and it just doesn't look as well! If you did not sharpen your lawn mower blades last fall after the last mowing get it done now. In general we recommend sharpening blades after every ten hours of mowing. Dull blades leave ragged cuts and nobody wants that! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Spring Flowering Shrubs

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Finally, and I mean finally, probably later than I can ever remember, we've got the spring flowering shrubs blooming. I think it was March 31st before I finally saw a forsythia blooming. Spring flowering shrubs are always very welcome and often because they are some of the first color after a sometimes long winter. Following is a list of several spring flowering shrubs that homeowners should really consider and we'll list them in order of blooming. Witchhazel is a little known shrub in these parts and can be tricky to find. I've had one in my backyard for years. It can sometime bloom as early as January but often blooms sporadically clear into March. The flowers are odd and somewhat fragrant. Forsythia should be familiar to everyone. Make sure you give it plenty of room so it can develop a full rounded style. Flowering quince is just now starting to bloom and at times the reddish blooms almost seem hidden within the main body of the plant. Koreanspice viburnum is another little known shrub and this one has a fragrance that you can smell a block away. Flowering Almond I see occasionally around and needs to be set somewhere that the delicate flowers can be accentuated because they really are beautiful. Serviceberries in general are little used around here but need to be, the same thing for black chokeberry. Good plants that will also provide some wildlife value for the birds. And let's end with my personal favorite - Lilac. I mean, who doesn't like lilac? Between the blossoms and the fragrance, it just exudes spring everywhere!

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