

Gardening with Chuck Programs for April 29 - May 5, 2019

What's That Purple Tree?

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. This is one of the times of year that I receive a lot of questions about what this or that tree is. Here's a hint folks - take out your phone and get a photo of it and then send it to me! The one that I was getting a lot of questions about early last week is the small trees that are covered with purple or lavender flowers, especially out in the pastures and the hills about the area. This is our native redbud. I know, it's more purplish pink than red, but it has been gorgeous this spring. It's a small tree that works well and has few problems. If you have friends with a pasture you can even just dig some up and move them to your yard if you want. They are also available in the trade. They do tend to be short-lived, figure 25 to 30 years, but they are great small accent trees and work well around the shade of other trees. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Asparagus Weed Control

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. If you have an asparagus bed, you should have been harvesting for several weeks now. If you are noticing some weeds in your asparagus, don't worry - just keep cutting. While there's nothing you can do during the harvest season, there are some things you can do once you get to the end of your 4 to 6 week harvest season. If you have weeds in your asparagus, once you've taken your last harvest, cut ALL the spears off just below ground level with a sharp knife. Immediately go in and spray the bed with glyphosate. Then follow up right after that with an application of a garden weed preventer. The glyphosate will kill most anything that is growing at the time of application which is why we want to cut off all the asparagus spears. The garden weed preventer will help keep new weeds from germinating. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Fertilizing Asparagus

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Yesterday I talked about weed control in your asparagus bed after the last harvest. All of the spears and foliage you removed should be taken away and burned or put in the trash to help control asparagus beetles or larvae that are on the plants. If you don't remove all the foliage after the last harvest, because you don't have weeds, keep an eye out for feeding damage and treat if you find any around. The other thing you want to do after the end of harvest is to fertilize again. The reason for this fertilization is to encourage lots of growth as this growth produces the food that the plant needs to build up the root reserves which are crucial to next year's harvest season success. Apply 1 to 2 pounds of a general garden fertilizer per 20 feet of row of about ½ pound of a higher nitrogen lawn fertilizer. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Hang on a little longer

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I'm sure that there are a few tomato lovers who have already planted some tomatoes outside. For those who haven't PLEASE try to hold on for another week. We've got 7 day soil temperature ranges of over 15 degrees. Air temperatures even more so. Tomatoes love warm weather. They NEED warm weather. A tomato plant that is growing nicely in your house or at the nursery that is then planted into cool soil and possibly cold weather will go into shock. The cold weather shock will cause it to revert back to vegetative growth even if it was already blooming. This will delay fruit set thus defeating why many people plant early. Under cold soil conditions the plant will even turn purple. Seriously the leaves will take on a purple shading because the cold soil prevents potassium uptake by the roots. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Orchardgrass

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. This is the time of year that we can really see a common lawn grass seed contaminant called orchardgrass.

Orchardgrass is a lighter green than fescue or bluegrass, it has rather flat stems at the base, it grows twice as fast as the fescue and the clumps tend to be very open and spreading.

Unfortunately there is no way to selectively remove it from lawns as it is a cool season perennial grass also. You have two options. First of all you can carefully apply some glyphosate to the clumps to kill them. Then you'll need to reseed where the clump was after it dies. You can also dig the clump up, put a little soil back in and replant with high quality fescue or bluegrass seed. Either one requires replanting to fill in the gap. Or, if you want, you can simply ignore it and just keep mowing it through the year. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.