

Peonies

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Have you been out looking at your peonies lately? Yeah, if they're anything like mine they are pretty sad right now! A lot of the leaves are covered with reddish brown spots and may even go clear down on to the stems. On top of that the leaves may very well be looking rather powdery right now with a light grayish white haze to them. The reddish spots are a disease we commonly call peony measles. The whitish powdery looking leaves have powdery mildew. Now, here's the good news. The peonies have had a good growing season. And even in less than good years, by the middle of August peonies have stored all the food reserves they need and are shutting down. To reduce the incidence of both of these diseases carefully cut off the plants at ground level in the coming weeks and dispose of the foliage! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Stress is Cumulative

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. In some ways plants and people are similar. Particularly when it comes to stress. Stress in long lived perennials like trees and shrubs is cumulative. Maybe if one thing hits them, like an 11 month drought, they can deal with that. But then before they even have a year to start to recover, they get hit with several months of abnormally wet weather. Root systems that were reduced due to drought are then at the start of the next growing season hit with lack of oxygen due to saturated soils. So a reduced root system is reduced even further. So now the homeowner is concerned and they hit the tree with a big shot of fertilizer. The fertilizer stimulates the tree to grow but it doesn't have the root system to handle it and you start to see a cascade of issues. Plants have been stressed so let's just go easy on them, OK? I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Fall Gardening

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. With all the attention on leaf diseases lately I've been neglecting the fall gardening. We're heading into the second half of August (and how is that possible by the way?) Amazingly, we still have about a month of the season where we can be planting a few fall garden crops. These are going to be leafy greens or short season root crops. To be specific we can be planting lettuce and spinach, we can be planting radishes and turnips. All four of these can be planted clear into mid September. The warm soil will cause these to germinate fairly quickly but the warm temperatures can sometimes crust the soil as we try to keep it damp to get them up. A little mulch, peat moss, vermiculite or compost sprinkled right over the row can help keep this from happening, but water regularly! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Bagworms...Still

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I am getting so sick and tired of bagworms. People, they didn't just appear on your plants - they've been there all summer, you just didn't notice them. Yes, there was a late hatch which has drawn out the season, but based on what I've seen most of the bagworms have finished feeding. Further treatments aren't going to do enough good, if any, to be worth the cost and the time. The bagworms are into the pupae stage and are pretty much going to be unaffected by pesticides at this time. Once they get through pupating in a few weeks the adult males emerge as a really odd looking moth. The females don't leave the bag. They attract the male with pheromones they mate, she develops the eggs and dies in the little bag. The eggs will stay there until they hatch next year. So mark you calendars for next June 10th to spray! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Oak Leaf Spots

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. You may have been noticing leaf spots on your oaks. To which I'm inclined to respond with, sure, why not, everything else has leaf spots this year! There is an oak leaf spot fungus called tubakia leaf spot. We normally see it more so on red oaks, including pin oaks, than white oaks, like our bur and chinkapin oaks. But thanks to all that rain and humidity and too many really calm days, we are seeing it on both this year. The leaf spots are typically round on red oaks with dead areas that follow the leaf veins. On white oaks we are more likely to see just dead blotches on leaves but no distinct spots. Trees may start dropping leaves if the damage to a leaf is severe, but seldom is there enough loss of leaf area to be of concern. Trees are on the downhill side of summer and no fungicide treatment is needed. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.