

## Gardening with Chuck Programs for August 26 - September 1, 2019

### Lawn Improvement Season

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. If you want to improve your fescue or bluegrass lawn it is time to get to work. The most important month for cool season lawns is September. You can do more to improve how your lawn looks next spring, now than in the spring. The weather is cooling down and grasses are starting to grow and develop a good root system. If you want to reseed or overseed, early September is the month. You should put your first fertilizer application down. Even though there are little weeds starting to sprout and grow, there's a lot more yet come. You can treat for weeds now, but you will need to treat again in mid October so you may want to wait. I wouldn't dethatch in the fall but if you want to core aerate, fall is a good time to do that. Keep mowing your yard at the recommended high levels of 3 to 3½ inches. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Preparing for Lawn Seeding

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. If you are seeding a new lawn or merely overseeding a lawn you need to do more than just grab a bag of grass seed and toss it out on the lawn. Power seeders are a far preferred method for this BUT first, it would do you well to pull a soil sample and get it analyzed. You likely don't need lime, but if you do it needs to be applied before seeding. But low phosphorus levels are a common problem in lawn seedings especially in new housing areas. With low phosphorus new plants emerge but then just sit there and don't grow or thicken up. Soil testing before you plant can help tailor the fertilizer plan to help achieve a lawn that will make you happy. One last note on preparations. If you want to seed into an lawn that has Bermuda grass, it's too late this year. That grass needed to be killed back in July! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Reblooming of Trees and Shrubs

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I want to interrupt my week of lawn information to talk about trees and shrubs that normally bloom just in the spring, blooming again this fall. It can happen anytime we have a period of stress during the summer followed by good growing conditions in August or September. I have lilacs blooming at the farm right now. Not a lot, but they are easily noticeable. I haven't seen any yet but it won't surprise me to see spirea and even forsythia blooming. For trees, flowering crabs are the most likely to be seen blooming late in the season. The buds were formed a few weeks ago and due to changes in growing conditions, following the hot and dry July, some of the buds fail to hold their dormancy and they start blooming. It doesn't mean the plant is stressed or dying, it's just one of those odd little things of nature! Enjoy. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Preferred Grasses to Plant

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I wander through stores that have grass seed reading the labels of the grass seed. All too often I see species listed that we shouldn't be planting. If you are planting a lawn this fall you should be planting tall fescue or Kentucky bluegrass. Everything else is essentially a waste of time. Rye grass, either annual or perennial, and any fescue other than tall, like creeping red or hard fescue simply are not adapted to our climate. Oh, they will come up quickly this fall and look really good now and in the spring, but along comes a hot dry summer and they just can't hold up. Before you buy grass seed to plant this fall look at the label. First it should have less than 0.1% of other crop seeds. Then if the bluegrass or tall fescue cultivars don't add up to over 90%, put it back. Don't buy grass that has a name like shady area. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Newly Seeded Lawn Care

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Once you have committed your new grass seed to the ground it becomes very important to keep it moist until it germinates and gets going. Daily or even twice daily very light waterings may be needed. Once it's up and easily seen back off to every other day, unless it's really hot, and then every third day. If it rains you can skip watering for a day or two. But once it's up and growing you want it to start getting its roots down into the soil so let the surface start to dry. Once the new seedlings get 3 inches tall, start mowing it at 3 inches. The clipping action stimulates it to tiller out but it needs a long leaf blade to create food. Don't cut it short, cut it tall. Lastly, there will be weeds. Don't worry about it. But don't break out the weed killers until it has been mowed at least three times and then do so lightly. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.