

Gardening with Chuck Programs for December 9 - 15, 2019

Old Garden Seed

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. For some reason, gardeners are reluctant to throw away old garden seed. If there are just a few seeds in the packet, they will hang on to it, sometimes for YEARS. Okay folks, we usually aren't talking about a lot of money here so when it gets to this time of year, go through all your hiding places, collect up all those opened packets and throw them away. Fine, some seeds will survive for several years and if you have a lot of something you may want to keep it back. Anything in the carrot family, including carrots, parsnips and parsley just need to be tossed as they have very short shelf life. Each seed packet will have a packed for some year stamped on it. If that date is 2017 or before, just throw it away. If it's 2018 or 19 and there's a lot of seed left, you can keep it but test germination prior to planting. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Volunteer Tree Control

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Even though it's nearly the middle of December, clear up until mid to late January is a good time to deal with volunteer trees in your yard, fence line, wherever. The general method at this time of year is to trim and treat so it's going to work best with volunteer trees that at least have a stem you can see when you cut it. All you have to do is cut off the tree fairly close to the ground and within a few minutes dab it with a concentrated stump treatment herbicide. While many people feel that Tordon RTU is the product of choice the label says that Tordon RTU should not be applied on residential or commercial lawns or near ornamental trees and shrubs. There's too much chance of damage to desirable trees and shrubs. A better choice is concentrated glyphosate, triclopyr, 2,4-D or dicamba. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Indoor Plant Temperatures

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. A couple of weeks ago I was talking about watching where you put your poinsettia to protect it from temperatures in your house that were simply too low for the plant to be happy. Well, it just isn't poinsettias that are picky about temperatures. While many popular house plants can handle cold and drafty windows some will need protection from temperatures below 60 degrees. This includes Chinese evergreen, anthuriums, crotons, false aralia, ming and balfour aralia. Don't let leaves of these plants touch cold glass or if you can feel cold air coming around the window at night, pull the drapes or move the plant. Outside of these, and poinsettias of course, many house plants will be fine down to 50 degrees and if you ask me, if you routinely keep your house colder than that, I'm not coming to visit! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Mouse Damage to Trees

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We probably haven't had any mouse damage to the bark of young trees, especially fruit trees yet because there's plenty of food available. But as the winter progresses, especially if we start to get snow cover that hides normal food sources, mice and even our native rats will start feeding on the bark of trees and shrubs. You can often see this damage on wild plum thickets and other trees. There's still time to get out around your smaller trees and make sure that there's no dead weed and grasses surrounding the base of your trees as this provides excellent cover for the mice to hide under while snacking on your tree's bark. Also be sure that if you have mulch around the trees it is a donut, not a volcano. Mulch should NEVER actually touch the trunk of the tree. Take steps now to protect those plants! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Gifts for Gardeners

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. If you have any avid hobbyist on your Christmas shopping list you know what a challenge it can be and gardeners are no different, in fact they may be worse. First of all, just be up front with them and ask them what they'd like, ask them to be specific. You can go to a hardware store or garden center and see all sorts of tools. But most gardeners want a very specific shovel or pruner or saw and no, they aren't all the same. With tools there is a big difference in quality and cost is often a good indication. Magazine subscriptions can be fairly safe as can be books. Good weather instruments like a high low recording thermometer or a GOOD non-electronic rain gauge is safe. I can help you with sources on these. Ultimately though, even though you may think it impersonal, a gift card may be the safest! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.