

## Gardening with Chuck Programs for February 11 - 17, 2019

### Japanese Beetles

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. As I often do this time of year I was perusing the lawn and garden section of a local store recently. New seasonal items were coming in and being stocked so I'm always checking out what pesticides are on hand, what garden seed was available as well as questionable other items. I noticed a nice stock of Japanese beetle traps on the shelf. Japanese beetles are an annoying little pest that we will be seeing more and more of in coming years. Do Japanese beetle traps work? Yes, they use a scent lure that really brings in the Japanese beetles. The problem though is that many of the beetles that are attracted to your yard often don't wind up in the trap and you end up with more destructive beetles in your yard than you would have had you done nothing. So buy a trap, and give it to your neighbors! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Oversized Houseplants

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Most homes do not have good environmental conditions to grow really healthy house plants. Combinations of temperature, humidity and light levels are simply not to the liking of most plants. But sometimes we get plants that do survive well in a given location and they grow. They grow and grow and grow. And before long they are simply too big for that location or they are just unmanageable. No, I don't want your houseplant. K-State doesn't want your houseplant. If it doesn't work for you anymore, toss it out and get a new one. Sometimes it has sentimental value though and people want to keep a piece of Uncle Rudy's Schefflera. If that's the case then we can try such things as rooting a cutting, or air layering the existing plant. Each plant is different so if you want to try this, call me for details. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Choosing Tomato Varieties

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Over the next three months I will be asked regularly to recommend a tomato variety to plant. Here's the problem with that: last time I could get a reliable number, there were over 1,500 named cultivars available for sale. Do you want small, medium or big tomatoes? Do you want paste or salsa tomatoes or slicers. Do you want low acid, a misnomer by the way, or traditional reds. Do you want heirlooms or the latest disease resistant hybrids. PLEASE do not come up to me and ask what tomato variety you should grow. Tell me what you want a tomato for and give me a few days to do some screening. The next two days I will talk about slicing tomatoes, the most popular, and talk about cultivars that have produced good yields in regional trials and those with really big fruit, also in regional trials. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Choosing Tomato Varieties - Productive Slicers

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. When it comes to slicing tomatoes you have a choice. A plant that will give a few really big tomatoes, or ones that will produce somewhat smaller fruits but a lot of them. In regional trials, here are the top 10 varieties based on overall yield. They ranged from nearly 21 pounds per plant with Jet Star down to 14 pounds per plant with Early Girl. The fruits of most of these are in the 4 to 6 ounce range which isn't bad for a productive slicer. So from top to bottom we have Jet Star, BHN 871, Whopper, German Red Strawberry, Big Beef, Beefsteak, Goliath, Abe Lincoln, Beefmaster Hybrid and Early Girl. Remember that these were grown as staked plants, excellent fertility and regular watering likely with a drip irrigation system. Several are heirlooms so disease resistance may not be great. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Choosing Tomatoes - Big Fruit

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. On the flip side of yesterday's program we have the top ten in regional trials for large fruits. Topping the list was Brandywine Red with fruit averaging 16 ounces each. Problem was that the plants only average 3 fruit per plant. Hawaiian Pineapple were almost as big at 15.5 ounces but plants average 19 fruits per plant. From there we get into a group of various productivity that had fruit sizes from 7.3 to 8.9 ounces per fruit. Production varied from 18 to 53 per plant. Varieties included Super Steak, Beefmaster Hybrid, Cherokee Purple, Dixie Golden Giant, Brandywine Yellow, Brandywine Black, Amana Orange and Vintage Wine. Beefmaster Hybrid showed up on both lists as a top producer in total pounds and large sized fruit. If you want a cultivar that may be good in both categories, that's the one! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.