

## Gardening with Chuck Programs for July 29 - August 4, 2019

### Male vs Female Fruit

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. While the internet is a constant source of frustration to me, it also gives me great job security in dismissing and correcting all the totally wrong information that's on it. So let's just dismiss the notion that fruit can be male or female. That is GARBAGE! From a botanists point of view a fruit is any plant structure that holds seed. It could be melons, it could be peppers or tomatoes. All of these structures are developed ovaries so technically all fruit are female. Bell peppers have 2 or 3 or 4 lobes due to pollination, environment or genetics. The difference in flavor has nothing to do with being a male or female fruit. Watermelons are not male or female. They have male and female flowers on the vine, but only the female flowers develop the melon. Sweetness, again, is dependent on many things, not gender. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Home Remedy Nonsense

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Continuing on yesterday's topic of internet nonsense, let's talk about home concoctions for insect and weed control. STOP IT. Many of you think that you are doing something great for the environment because you are making "home remedies". The weed control one is my favorite - lets see is it vinegar, dish soap and Epsom salts? First of all have you ever looked at the ingredients in dish soap. Nothing natural there. How many people are using table salt instead of Epsom salts? Big difference and you can totally mess up soil with salt. Vinegar alone, if it is high enough acidity will burn plant vegetation. But unless weeds are seedlings, they'll grow right back. Many of these home made concoctions are actually illegal in the eyes of the EPA and are environmentally worse than properly used pesticides. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Basal Sprouts on Trees

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Many species of trees are prone to generating sprouts off the base of the tree or what we call basal tree sprouts or adventitious sprouts. Apple and pear trees as well as maple trees seem to be the most prone to this but literally any species of tree can do it. Part of it has to do with the species some of it has to do with how the tree is pruned and even the amount of sunlight that falls on the base of the tree can influence this. In decades gone by you could by hormone solutions that would tend to inhibit this growth, but they are no longer available. Asphalt or tar based pruning sealers won't help either. In fact there's nothing you can do to stop them. As trees age they sometimes send up fewer shoots especially if there is more shading. We also know that rubbing off the sprouts rather than cutting slows the sprouting. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Apple Leaf Spots

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I've been fielding a lot of questions about leaf spots on apple tree leaves. Many of these leaves are now drying up and falling off the tree. Don't panic over this, the trees will live. All the rain in May was perfect conditions for infection of apple leaves with cedar apple rust or apple scab. Rust infects in the spring, scab can infect throughout the year, although no rain is not conducive to new infections. All you can do now is rake up the leaves and if it stays dry, give the tree a good soaking to encourage production of new leaves. If your apple trees, fruit or flowering crabapple, are heavily defoliated this summer, consider fungicide treatments next year starting in mid April with myclobutanil or chlorothalonil. Treat about once a week into early June as this is the strongest period of infection. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Powdery Mildew of Lilacs

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Many lilac cultivars are very susceptible to a disease called powdery mildew. This is the disease that causes the leaves to look like they are covered with a white powder. It's quite common to get this disease on lilacs and we often see it in the late summer and early fall and simply don't worry about it. This year, all that rain in May set us up for a great spring infection period. My lilacs at the farm were loaded with it. Then the weather dried up and got warmer and now all those infected leaves have dried up and shriveled up making the plant look like it's dying. Good news is that in a few weeks, especially with a little watering, the bush should be putting out new leaves. However, if you have just a stem here and a stem there that up and die, that is likely lilac borer which needs a spring treatment. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

