

Gardening with Chuck Programs for June 17 - 23, 2019

Bagworms

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Bagworms are up and running. Will a slow crawl is more like it. I will be holding a bagworm control workshop this Thursday night at 7 p.m. in my backyard. Come to the corner of Tamerisk and Columbine in Greenhills and look for me in the backyard. We'll take a look at the tiny little bagworms on my arborvitae and you'll see just how tricky they can be to see at this stage. Then I'll discuss how best to control them and I'll demonstrate what I mean when I say to soak the plant down with a hose end sprayer. That's Thursday evening June 20 at 7 p.m. in the backyard of 613 Tamerisk Drive in Junction City. Remember that we need to spray twice to make sure we get good control. The first spray can be anytime now and the second spray two weeks later. But please get on it now, not in early August! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Throw the Calendar Out the Window

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Too many gardeners pay too much attention to the calendar and not enough attention to mother nature. This year is weird and the soils have been wet. Many of our summer crops may not be planted yet - but so what. When the ground is dry enough, plant them. You may not have the first tomatoes or the earliest zucchini, but who cares. Didn't get your cool season crops planted? Don't sweat it, many of these early season crops can also be planted in July and August for harvest in September and October. In fact fall potato planting season starts about the first of July! This is a year that I'm suggesting you throw the calendar out the window. Play around a little. What have you got to lose? Nothing - and a lot of experience to gain. Just get your seed ready to start planting again in July, because I will! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Easy on the Fertilizer

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. As gardeners we want our gardens to grow, really really good! So we tend to emphasize fertilizing and watering. And all too often both are overdone! I see a lot of garden soil tests come back with nutrient levels through the roof, especially phosphorus. Unless you know that you need phosphorus because of a soil test, I would concentrate on using fertilizers that are primarily nitrogen. This includes fertilizers like nitrate of soda, blood meal, or ammonium sulfate. For tomatoes I would use calcium nitrate as it may result in less blossom end rot problems early in the season. Side dress lightly but regularly through the growing season. Wet conditions can cause loss of nitrogen but we also don't want to put on too much nitrogen as excess will cause lots of green growth, but not many fruits. So please take it easy! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Grasshoppers

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Much of last year was very dry. Dry conditions favor grasshoppers. Even though it turned wet at the end of the summer, there will still be a lot of grasshoppers and we'll probably get a lot of small grasshoppers getting active real soon. While there are natural controls that will reduce grasshopper populations when it is wet, we may still see grasshoppers getting into gardens and causing problems. If it does turn off dry, these problems will get worse. The most important thing to do to keep grasshopper issues at bay is to keep weeds and grass around gardens mowed down to reduce hiding places. If you see a lot of hoppers in the grass, spray strips 20 to 30 feet wide around the garden. Stop them before they get into the garden. And keep in mind that small grasshoppers are easier to control than large ones! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Bristly Rose Slugs

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I was out mowing at the farm the other evening and drove by the big old fashioned rose bush and noticed that a bunch of the leaves were brown, as in all the green had been eaten off the leaves. This is the bristly rose slug. This critter is a sawfly and the larvae may look like a cross between a caterpillar and a slug. The larvae can be up to ½ inch long and if you look closely at them you will see they are covered with fine hairlike spines in clusters, thus leading to the name bristly rose slug. As smaller larvae they eat the surface off the leaves. As they get older they will eat the entire leaf. I often ignore them but you can treat them with spinosad, insecticidal soap or horticultural oil for an organic control or a lawn and garden insecticide with permethrin. Or you can just use a strong spray of water to knock them off! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.