

Gardening with Chuck Programs for March 11 - 17, 2019

Gardeners, find patience!

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. This coming weekend is St. Patrick's Day. I'm not sure what nimrod suggested that potatoes need to be planted on St Patrick's Day, but I've never been a believer in it. And this year, you shouldn't either. Planting anything needs to be done a little bit by the calendar and a lot by the weather and soil conditions. This year, especially this year, gardeners and homeowners are really going to need to exercise a great deal of patience and restraint. Soils are cold, soils are saturated. It's going to take a spell to get them warmed up and dried out enough to start planting. If you didn't fall till it's going to take even longer to get them dry enough to till. Don't be in a rush. If you don't get potatoes planted this spring, plant them in July for a fall harvest. Soil is unforgiving so don't mess it up! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Beware of door to door tree trimmers!

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. From time to time we have tree trimming businesses that come through the area knocking on doors and asking if you need to have your trees trimmed. If this ever happens to you, just tell them NO and close the door. While some of these folks may very well be good arborists, we also have good arborists locally that will come to your house WHEN you call them and likely will do the job for less. Many of these door to door trimming services are not licensed arborists, they likely don't have a license to do business in Junction City and they will probably charge you way more than you should pay for the service. If these door to door trimmers try to scare you or pressure you, ask for a business card and then call me. I will come and examine your trees and then we can discuss whether the trees need trimming. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Blueberry RUP

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We have pesticides that are called restricted use products because you have to be licensed to buy and use them. I'd like to create a restricted use plant category so that only people that have been trained can grow them. Topping my restricted use plant list would be blueberries. I have many people every year ask about growing blueberries. Blueberries are not native to Kansas. Blueberries do not like Kansas soils and they don't like Kansas weather. If you want to grow blueberries you start amending the soil a year before planting, you pick your site with great care and you spend a lot of time working with them throughout the year. If you don't, you'll have no blueberries and a weed patch. It's truly easier to buy fresh blueberries. If you still think you want to grow blueberries, I have a bulletin on how. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Dormant Seeding

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. While it's far too wet for traditional grass seeding right now, you still have a few weeks left to try some dormant overseeding. There are two basic methods that you can try under the given conditions. If we have a light snowfall, meaning enough to make the ground white but not over one inch, then go out while there is still snow on the ground and hand broadcast seed on areas that need to be thickened up. As the snow melts it pulls the seed down to the soil surface. The other way is to get out on a frosty morning when the soil surface is slightly frozen and broadcast the seed on the thin areas. The wet soil, as it freezes and thaws creates little pockets that the seed will fall into. As the soil dries, these little soil pockets collapse covering the seed with soil that will sprout and grow when it finally warms up. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Planning Ahead

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. One of the biggest challenges gardeners face is creating a realistic timeline that improves their chances for success. A gardeners biggest impediment to success is the impulses that come from spring fever, which is going to be realllly bad this year. Many of our plans for perennial plantings needs to begin a year ahead of planting time. Asparagus and rhubarb will both benefit greatly from a year of soil preparation and soil amendment. If you want to establish a wildflower bed you need to start this year for planting in 2020. You need to get all the existing plants, especially tough perennial plants, killed so you have a clean seed bed come next year. Many of our soils have high clay levels and lots of organic matter would improve the soil. Don't rush into something because of spring fever - plan ahead! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.