

Tree Leaf Diseases

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I'm just going to tell you right now that because of the weather so far this month, there will be a lot of trees that develop leaf diseases and there will be many disfigured leaves falling off trees in the weeks to come. But don't worry! It's early, there's plenty of soil moisture and the trees will quickly put out new leaves. You also need to know that spraying, or paying someone to spray the trees at this time for leaf diseases is a waste of time. The fungicide would have needed to be applied BEFORE the rain. Some of the trees that I expect to see with leaf disease issues include sycamores with anthracnose, elms with several diseases, ash trees with ash rust, maples with anthracnose and peach trees with peach leaf curl. This isn't an all inclusive list but leaves will be falling from diseases, or hail, or wind. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Too Late to Treat

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. When people get sick, they go to the doctor and depending on the diagnosis, they may be "cured" so to speak with appropriate medication. Some issues often viral, can't be cured, but they can be prevented through proper use of vaccines. Plants sort of fall into that latter group. Once a plant gets infected we can't really cure it. We just don't have the chemicals that can do that. We have to focus on prevention. Think of treating for plant diseases like the vaccination approach. We have to treat, and often keep treating, to have a protective layer on the leaves to stop the fungal diseases. Cedar apple rust sprays needed to go on starting in late April. Peach Leaf Curl, back in February or early March. In a few more weeks we'll need to start treating tomatoes for septoria. But once the disease shows up, it's too late! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Termites or Ants

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. It's May, we've had a bunch of rain, so now all we need is perhaps a little more warm weather and we'll have termite and ant swarms popping up everywhere. People panic when they see these swarms but let me just tell you right now that termites are everywhere in our area. And if the swarm is occurring outside of your house but not out of the house, then don't get overly shook. Differentiating swarming termites from swarming ants is actually quite simple. Three things to look at beginning with body. Ants have a narrow pinched in wasp like waist. Termites are thick bodied all the way through. Termites have two pairs of wings all the same size, ants have two pairs of wings that are different sizes. Lastly, the antenna of ants are elbowed with obvious joints. Termites antennas are curled and look like a string of beads. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Sweet Corn Frustrations

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Right behind tomatoes on everyone's favorite vegetable list is sweet corn, corn on the cob, roasting ears, call it what you want. The problem is that most home gardens are not well suited to growing sweet corn. Sweet corn has a male flower at the top, called a tassel, and a female flower half way up the stem called an ear (with silks). The pollen falls from the tassels and lands on the silks. Because the wind blows in Kansas pollen doesn't always fall straight down. If you just plant a single row of corn, it likely will be poorly pollinated and have few kernels. You really need to have a minimum of 6 to 8 rows at least 25 feet long to have good pollination and bigger is better. Plus, surprisingly, most gardeners don't fertilize sweet corn the way it really needs to be to develop large plants and ears. It's a tricky crop! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

When Trees Fail

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. While it can happen literally anytime of year, we usually have a spike in tree failures in spring and summer. Tree failures are when large limbs break out of trees or entire trees fall down. There's a lot of reasons having to do with weight of leaves and wind from thunderstorms, but whenever I see or hear of a tree coming down I go and investigate. Rarely do sound trees fall down and virtually every tree that has failed has outward evidence to warn of pending issues. When you start to see holes open up in major limbs of trees or trunks, this is a problem. Mushrooms on the trunk or the base of the tree are a major red flag. There's no way to predict when a tree might fail. But we can usually see signs of a tree in decline well before a failure happens. If there's nothing in the fall zone no problem, but in your yard.... I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.