

Gardening with Chuck Programs for October 14 - 20, 2019

Time to Fill the Bird Feeders

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We've had a couple of cold fronts move through the state with some strong north winds and the birds are on the move. As some birds move out of the state, heading for warmer climates where there are still insects, others are moving in to the state to spend the winter. While there is a lot of natural food sources out there, it isn't too early to start getting those backyard bird feeders cleaned up and filled. Junco', and Harris Sparrows are already being seen about the state and it won't be too much longer before they are in your back yard. If you have left over seed from last winter, the best thing to do is dump it on the ground and let the birds sort through it. Niger thistle seed goes rancid over the summer, toss it out and buy new. Check the new bag and make sure it was bagged for 2019 though. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Ornamental Grass Maintenance

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I don't know about you, but my ornamental grass, a.k.a. pampas grass, went nuts this year. Full and tall and lots of seed heads. It really is quite amazing. If these clumps of ornamental grasses are well away from the house or buildings you can just leave them alone for the winter and let them serve as shelter for some little critters. However, if grasses are next to your house or a building it would be advisable to reduce them greatly in size as they can be a real fire hazard. If you've ever burned a clump of this stuff off in the spring you know what I mean. As the grasses go dormant you can trim them back to greatly reduce the risk of fire. Ultimately, this fall, I wouldn't want to trim those clumps back any lower than 6 inches. Take care when doing this as those grass blades are sharp and the dust very itchy! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Weed and Feed

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We are past the middle of October. We've had some good rains in recent weeks and based on my yard there are lots of little broadleaf weeds that have started growing. As the soil is cooling off it is unlikely we'll get too many more sprouting and growing. So anytime in the next month is a good time to apply weed and feed products OR a broadleaf weed control product. At this time either the granular weed and feed or liquid herbicide treatments are going to work great. Cooler temperatures will cause them to work slower, but they'll work well none the less. As we move on into November the liquid treatments may be preferred. Be sure to apply the liquids when temperatures are above 50 degrees. For the weed and feed granular products please read and follow all label directions. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Forcing Bulbs

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. About January or February many gardeners are thinking that they sure wish they had some blooms in the house to fight off spring fever. The problem is that by then, it's too late to do anything other than go out and buy something. Many of our spring flowering bulbs can be forced into bloom for a winter time splash of color in the house. There is a little bit of work involved but the big thing is that it takes anywhere from 8 to 16 weeks to get them into bloom stage depending on the species. You've got to plant them, get them watered and then give them weeks of cold treatment before they will trigger flower bud formation. I have excellent information on forcing bulbs but you need to get started on it pretty soon. Stop by the Extension Office or give us a call at 238-4161 to get the information on forcing bulbs. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Winter Storage of Summer Bulbs

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We've had enough chilly weather to know that winter is on its way. It's time to get those tropical and non winter hardy bulbs out of the ground and into storage. Things like glads are tougher than say elephant ears. Start with the most tender stuff and get it out of the ground before it gets any colder. Place it in a warm dry place to dry down then carefully knock off any soil and removed the dried up plant parts remaining. This goes for all the root parts you are bringing in. The next step is crucial - you can dust with a fungicidal powder if you want but you need to pack the plant parts in peat moss and don't let them touch each other. By separating with peat moss, you reduce the risk of a rot organism skipping one to the other in storage. Then place the box in a semiwarm dry place until next spring. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.