

Get Your Garlic Ordered

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. If you've been listening to my programs for any length of time you know I'm a bit of a manic garlic grower. Just a couple of weeks ago I submitted my garlic order for this fall's planting. We plant garlic about the third week of October, weather and soil conditions allowing. We need to get garlic in the ground in the fall so it can get rooted down, settled in and get that cold treatment so it will be more productive. Spring planting sometimes works, sometimes doesn't. You need to order known cultivars. If you just buy some garlic in the grocery store you don't know what you are getting other than that it probably grew well in California or Mexico. There are several good mail order garlic providers. I can supply you with names, web sites and even give you some good variety recommendations. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Tree Decline

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. When people notice trees suddenly starting to go into decline and even show signs of dying, they automatically assume that it is disease related. Sometimes it is. Pines with pine wilt and American elms with Dutch Elm Disease are two that come to mind. But far more often, trees that are unthrifty and in decline are doing so not because of diseases but because of environmental conditions, long or short term weather, soil conditions, just a whole host of things we call abiotic. Trees are living breathing organisms. They can grow fine for 15 or 20 years and then as they hit maturity they start to stress. A tree under stress is going to be more prone to getting infected with a disease. A tree under stress releases hormones that insects hone in on. Your goal, as a tree owner, is to learn about your tree and what it needs! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Closing Up the Garden

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. By now, many gardeners have just about reached the end of their rope with their garden. Other than some winter squash or pumpkins many gardeners are ready to just walk away from it. But please don't do that. If you are going to plant garlic, pick a side of the garden and get it worked down so you can plant garlic in another month. If you live outside the city limits pull everything up, put it in a pile and when it is dry enough, burn it. If you don't live in the country, pull up the plants, especially the tomatoes that are loaded with disease spores and throw them in the trash. Not in a compost pile, it won't get hot enough to destroy the disease spores. Then, as everything gets through growing, if the weather and soil conditions allow, till up the garden. This gets the garden ready for an early spring planting season! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Keep Mowing Tall

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Many, many homeowners get an itch to mow their yards lower than they should. I think they feel that they want it to look like a golf course putting green. Let me tell you, that you can't do that -wrong grass, wrong soil and wrong equipment. Our fescue lawns really need to be mowed at 3 to 3½ inches tall, bluegrass at 2½ to 3 inches. Even as we go through the fall season we especially need to keep mowing it tall and even more important if just fertilized it. Those plants need a long leaf blade to keep producing food for root and crown growth. This is no time to cheat the plant on energy. Now, if you want to, the very last time you mow it this fall OR, more preferably, the first time you mow it next spring, you can drop it a notch or two. I'd prefer to keep it high overwinter though to protect the grass crowns! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Fall Planting of Trees

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Fall can be a good time to plant trees. They are already going dormant and really up into mid November you can usually get by with planting trees. This gets the trees into the ground and allows them to get settled in so when roots get active, which can occur as early as late February they are in place and you get less transplant shock and more growth. If you plant maples this time of year, try to orient them the same direction they were in the nursery and be sure to wrap the trunks with tree wrap to protect from sunscald. If you want to stake them, do it with one 2 x 2 driven into the ground at an angle in the direction of the prevailing wind and then tied loosely so it has some ability to move. While most trees can be fall planted, we discourage fall planting of fruit trees as well as redbuds, willow, scarlet and black oaks. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.