

## Gardening with Chuck Programs for September 9 - 15, 2019

### New Lawn Weed Control

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. When you plant a new lawn, anytime of year, you will have weeds. That's just a fact of life. While there are a few weed preventers labeled for use in new seedings, I don't generally recommend them. Most of our post emerge weed killers, while designed to kill broadleaf weeds, not grasses, can damage small grass seedlings. What we need to do is focus on getting the new lawn started and then worry about weeds later. We recommend that you have mowed the lawn, at the proper height, at least twice if not three times before applying a weed killer. If you get your lawn planted in early September that will normally work well because you'll well be into October before it's been mowed two or three times. Since many of these weeds will germinate into early October, it is best to treat in late October. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Overseeding A Lawn

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Sometimes our lawns are a little bit thin, especially after a year like last year. We still have grass there, and in some cases the grass is pretty good, but other places it's a little thin. We don't really need to start all over, we just want to thicken things up a bit. This is called overseeding. We can't just throw grass seed out by hand and expect it to get established. Only about one in a thousand seeds will sprout and grow. We need to get that grass seed into the ground and to do that we either power rake, broadcast seed and water, or preferably we use a power seeder which slices slits in the soil and drops the seed in. We'll use one half the normal seeding rate so for fescue that would be 3 to 4 pounds per 1,000 square feet or for bluegrass 1 to 1½ pounds per thousand square feet. Apply starter fertilizer before planting. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Dividing Peonies

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Peonies are a long lived perennial spring blooming flower. If set in full sun and given just a hint of care, they can go for literally decades needing no attention. But if they should decrease blooming or stop blooming it means they need to be reset. Or if you want to divide peonies, now is the time to do it. Dig them up, cut the clumps apart, and I'll tell you right now that these plants can develop huge root systems over the years so you may need a spade or an axe to separate the roots. Look for the buds or eyes on the top of the crowns. When you separate the clumps try to have several eyes per section. It's also very important to replant these crowns with the eyes at least one inch deep but not more than two inches deep. If these eyes are too deep, flowers will be reduced or they won't bloom at all. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Power Raking or Core Aeration

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Power raking and core aerating are two things that we periodically do for our cool season lawns. We hear a lot about power raking but not much about core aerating. Power raking is designed to eliminate excessive thatch which most lawns don't have. Core aerating is designed to help reduce compaction which just about all lawns have. Core aerating machines take soil cores about an inch in diameter and 3 to 4 inches long out of the ground and plop them on the surface. This opens up breathing holes in the yard letting organic matter and even grass seed or fertilizer down into the soil. The cores break down and melt into the lawn or are sometimes raked up and removed. If you need to fertilize or even want to overseed then core aerating is a great way to go and works well during the fall season. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Fertilize the Lawn!

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. If you want to fertilize just once during a year, do it in the fall, preferably during September. At this time the grass is really growing well, developing larger crowns and root systems. Fertilizing now causes the grass plant to kick into high gear and put all that nitrogen right into the plant. It's too early for a weed and feed, but the perfect time for fertilizing. If you want to apply a second fertilizer application then do it in late October. You may see winterizers advertised for this but all you need is any high nitrogen fertilizer. Late October, however IS a good time for a weed and feed product. The weeds we try to control with weed and feed products will germinate and start growing up through early October. Earlier fall treatments miss the late ones, but the late October treatment will be very effective! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.