

## Gardening with Chuck Programs for April 19 - 25, 2020

### Pull Back on the Reins

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. One thing that last week should have showed is that Mother Nature is still in charge and she will call the shots. A week ago Sunday we had soil temperatures in the high 50s. By late last week they were in the mid to low 40s. AND we had morning air temperatures well into the 20s. Any plant that didn't have good cold tolerance that was in the garden was in trouble. The weather this week is looking a little bit better. Soil temperatures will be coming up this week as daytime temperatures get back in the 60s and 70s. That doesn't mean that we don't have any more cold weather coming. It just means that we are about back on track with where we should be at this time of year. Tomato planting time is still 15 to 20 days out. We can start planting melons, lettuce, beets, carrots, collards and chard right now though! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Do I Still Need to Spray?

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. The chances of having a lot of fruit this year really took a big hit with some of the temperatures in the past ten days. Which invariably brings up the question from home orchardists of whether they still need to spray their trees this spring and summer. While many gardeners think about fruit tree sprays for insect control in the fruit there are also many foliar diseases that trees need to be protected against. Things like cedar apple rust and apple scab in apples, as well as cherry leaf spot in cherries are diseases that need to be controlled. Any of these diseases, in susceptible cultivars will greatly reduce leaf area through the summer. With fewer leaves that trees won't have the energy they need to produce lots of flower buds later in the summer which will then bloom next year and hopefully produce a fruit crop. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Spreader-stickers

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Leaves of plants often have thin layers of wax on them. This protects the leaves from dehydrating rapidly and drying out. While necessary, it can also be a problem when you are spraying. If you are trying to get a fungicide or insecticide on a leaf or fruit to protect it or a herbicide on a weed to kill it, these waxes can cause spray droplets to bead up and roll right off. There are additives that we can put in the spray solution called spreader stickers. They are sort of like soap in that they break up the surface tension of water so that it can do a better job of covering the leaf or fruit surface. They can also help reduce how fast rain will wash the pesticide off. I would use them every time when you are spraying insecticides or fungicides on fruit trees. Read the label with herbicides as some call for them and some won't! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Ash/Lilac Borers

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Long before we even know what the emerald ash borer was we were dealing with ash lilac borers. While nowhere's near as devastating as the emerald ash borer on ash trees it is still of concern in ash and lilacs both. This is the pest that causes stems in lilac and privet to up and die, or to weaken the top of a small ash tree so it breaks out. The damage is done by a small larva that turns into a moth that looks like a wasp. These moths are emerging now and will start to lay eggs. To protect ash, lilacs or privets you need to treat the lower portion of the stems or trunk with permethrin. Spray to the point of runoff all the way around. This controls the small borer as they hatch and try to burrow into the plant. Normally two sprayings will control them. First spray is when spirea bloom, second one 4 weeks later. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Don't Dig Too Deep

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Over the years we've learned a lot of things about planting trees that are contrary to what we've always heard.

When it comes time to plant a tree, dig the hole no deeper than the root ball of the tree. You want it sitting slightly higher than it did in the nursery. Don't bury it, we need to see those root flares.

**BUT** dig the hole three to five times as wide as the root ball. Don't disturb the soil at the bottom of the hole. Digging it too deep and adding amendments is a mistake. Took us a long time to figure that out. In fact just use the soil you dig out of the hole to fill it back in. Roots are going to go out much faster and much further than they go down. So give them plenty of area to go out and make sure that they are headed that way when you get it out of the burlap or planting pot.

Get that tree started right for best growth. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.