

## Gardening with Chuck Programs for August 24 - 30, 2020

### Tree Damage From Wind

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We were lucky that the wind that blew through a week ago Sunday night was nothing like what Iowa experienced two weeks ago. But it did do some damage to trees. When wind blows limbs, large or small, out of trees, there is nothing that we can do to "fix" the problem. Tree bark doesn't heal like human skin. All the tree can do is slowly grow a different type of tissue called callous tissue over the wound. It can take years. Don't put any pruning sealer on these wounds. They slow the process. If you feel the need to do anything, paint it with a neutral color exterior latex paint, but nothing with a petroleum base. Lastly don't let anyone come in and say they'll fix your problems by topping or removing all the large limbs from your tree. This is a death sentence for the tree and only makes problems worse! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Before Planting, Soil Test

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. In the next 6 to 7 weeks we are going to see a lot of grass seed go in the ground. The month of September and really from now into September, is the preferred time for seeding our cool season lawn grasses including tall fescue and Kentucky bluegrass. The biggest mistake a homeowner can make though is to just decide one fine September day to go out and plant grass seed. Most of our major turfgrass species are pretty tolerant of the wide range of soil pH's that we have. What turfgrasses aren't tolerant of however are low soil phosphorus levels. Many times, our newer developments around this region are in areas that were once native pastures. Our native soils are very low in phosphorus and that can inhibit turfgrass growth. If you are thinking about planting some new grass this fall, please soil test first! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Don't Prune Shrubs Now!

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. As you look around your yard do you know where your spring flowering shrubs are? Those would be plants like flowering quince, forsythia, spirea and lilac. Make a good note of those and from now until they finish blooming next spring, stay away from them with the pruning shears! All of these species, as well as many other spring flowering shrubs, are busy right now making those flower buds for next spring on new wood that was produced this summer. Pruning anytime from now until they actually bloom next spring results in removal of those flower buds that you want to see bloom next spring. If we get into a dry spell, as in two weeks with no rain and no lawn irrigation, give them a drink to encourage them to keep producing those buds, but just keep the pruning equipment away from them for now! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Dividing Daylilies

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Daylilies are well adapted to Kansas growing conditions but under good growing conditions they need to be divided regularly to stay vigorous. While necessary this isn't for the faint of heart. You basically need to dig up each daylily clump with a spade and then but spading forks (a.k.a. potato forks) into it back to back and pull it apart and break it down to a clump about the size of a medium sized head of cauliflower or toss it on the lawn, get a garden hose to jet all the soil out and then start rolling it around until it separates into pieces. Occasionally, if it hasn't been too long, you may be able to leave part of the clump in the soil and just cleave off new starts from the edge. Once you have your divided pieces, replant them about 24 to 30 inches apart at the same depth they were, backfill, and water. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Iron Chlorosis in Bluegrass

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. It isn't uncommon this time of year to find bluegrass in our lawns that is far more yellow than it is green. This is iron chlorosis, or essentially anemia in plants. Part of the problem is soil pH that is above 7 tends to tie up iron in the soil making it unavailable to the plant. Some plants are more sensitive to this than others - bluegrass vs fescue for example. There is also an interaction between the roots of the bluegrass and hotter soils as we generally only see this in the hottest time of summer. It also appears to be worse in wet summers compared to drier summers. You can apply iron as a foliar spray to temporarily fix it. You can use ammonium sulfate in the fall to start lowering soil pH. Adding nitrogen fertilizer in the summer makes it worse. Ultimately, it'll go away so I don't worry about it. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.