

Gardening with Chuck Programs for December 7 - 13, 2020

Be Careful Where You Get Your Information

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I receive an email from Ohio State Extension every week on horticultural topics. Good information. I know several of the people that contribute to it. But recently they have been making some recommendations on street trees. Some good recommendations of some great trees, for Ohio. About half of those trees I'd never recommend for us in north central Kansas. Digital technology has compressed the heck out of the globe. On our phones, on our computers, we can scour the internet and pull up information from almost anywhere. The information may or may not be good information. Or it may be good information for somewhere else. I've had people call up asking where to get something because the internet told them that's what they needed. It was wrong. So choose your sources carefully! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Heirlooms vs GMOs

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. When we start selecting vegetable varieties to plant gardeners often feel that they have to choose between Heirlooms, hybrids and GMOs. First of all, there are very few GMO vegetable varieties available for home gardeners so contrary to what you may hear, it is basically a non-issue. As to heirlooms vs hybrids, it's personal choice, or more likely personal taste. Many heirlooms may have a flavor that we remember from our childhood. But many heirlooms lack disease and insect resistance that newer hybrids have. It comes down to personal preference. If you like a certain variety that you've been growing, keep growing it. If you don't, try something else and ask other gardeners what they like and grow. There's lots of fish in the sea and a lot of vegetable varieties that you can grow. So have some fun! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Is Old Seed Worth Keeping

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Every year gardeners come across partial packages of seed stashed hither and thither, and sometimes even unopened packages. Gardeners are basically hoarders at heart and the thought of throwing something away is just unconscionable to them. But here's the thing - most seeds, other than in the carrot family, can probably be held over for a year. Plants in the carrot family and seed older than a year just needs to be pitched. Older seed may be good, but we often have a narrow window of opportunity in which to plant and if the seed isn't good, a replant may be way too late for optimal results. Seed sometimes seems a little expensive, especially if you've been gardening for a few decades, but it really isn't that bad in the bigger scheme of things. So I'd recommend just tossing the seed and buying new! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Think About Ordering Early

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. For over 30 years I've been encouraging people to hide those seed catalogs that have already started showing up in the mailbox and wait until late January to do any ordering. But then this year happened and even I was left steppin' and fetchin' to get some of the varieties that I wanted to plant. I probably shouldn't admit it but I've already ordered my onions and leeks for next spring. The pandemic caught folks by surprise and gardening was something that everyone felt safe doing and there went the supplies. Follow the same guidelines I recommend every year of planning well before you order. But this year, start that planning now and once you know what you have room for, what you REALLY have room for, go ahead and get it ordered. That way your aren't stuck with the dregs for your 2021 garden! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Of Mice and Trees

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Mice and even voles (which look like humpbacked short tailed mice) are everywhere in our natural areas including around our yards, gardens and orchards. Mice are plant and seed eaters. They adapt to whatever food sources are available. Unfortunately, high on their list is the delectable tender bark of young trees especially fruit trees. Mice know that they are low on the food chain so they are very cautious and like to be able to stay hidden when they feed. If mulch or dead weeds and grass cover the bottom of a young tree, they can hide down underneath that cover and chew the bark off those trees all the way around, effectively killing the tree. Keep mulch several inches away from the base of trees, thing a doughnut not a volcano, and also remove dead grass, weeds and leaves. Keep it open, keep it safe! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.