

Gardening with Chuck Programs for February 24 - March 1, 2020

Fertilize Spring Flowering Bulbs

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. You may already have spring flowering bulbs that are pushing green foliage above ground. If you have a real sunny spot you might even have some crocus blooming by now. Regardless, these plants, like all plants, need fertilization to stay healthy and productive. The best time to fertilize these plants is when they are initializing spring growth. It takes a little time for the nutrients to get down to the roots so when you see the first sprigs of green emerging, get the fertilizer applied. A general purpose fertilizer like 10-10-10 is a good choice and 2½ pounds per 100 sq foot is a good rate to apply it at. Of course, most of us don't have bulb beds that big so to scale it down to size figure on about 1 rounded teaspoon per square foot. Scatter this evenly over the area and water in if it doesn't rain soon. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

What Soil Tests Don't Tell You

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. When I'm visiting with a homeowner about a lawn or garden growth issue one of the first things I'll suggest is to have a soil test if there hasn't been one for a couple of years. To be honest, this will reveal the problem only about a quarter of the time. It provides a lot of good information for me and the homeowner, but all too often the problem isn't soil nutrients, other than that the levels are high enough that they don't need to fertilize for the next couple of years. More often we are going to run into problems of not enough sunlight, especially with lawns. Or perhaps too much sun and wind in the case of sensitive plant species. It may be competition with tree roots or other plants or even compacted soils that inhibit root development. The problems can be many but a soil test does give us a starting point! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Asparagus Planting Time is Approaching

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Asparagus is a long lived perennial vegetable crop that is started in the spring. It's a rather extensive process but one that is important to follow. Start by digging a trench if you have more than a couple of crowns. You want to use one or two year old crowns. Dig the trench 6 to 8 inches deep and then mound it up a little in the center. Anytime between March 15th and April 15th plant the crowns 18 to 24 inches apart and then cover with about an inch of soil. As the new stems grow through the first year gradually add more soil so that the trench is fully filled in by the end of the first growing season. If you have a heavy clay soil mix some organic matter into the soil below the crowns and in the soil you cover the crowns with. Recommended cultivars are just about any with the word Jersey in the name! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

How Soon to Apply Crabgrass Preventer

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. If spring fever isn't starting to hit many homeowners it soon will. One of the first things that many lawn care fanatics want to do is apply crabgrass preventers. While you can get away with doing this in March if you use something that has Barricade or Dimension as an active ingredient it really is a little too early. In all cases you are better off to wait until early April or when the redbud trees are in full bloom. That's a lot of redbud trees not just one in a warm and sunny spot. Once applied these crabgrass preventers need to be activated with rainfall or irrigation. It generally only takes about a quarter inch of rain to activate them. If you have an irrigation system and it doesn't rain within about 7 to 10 days of application, an irrigation would probably be a good thing to do! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Avoid Mail Order Lawn Care

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I've been seeing a lot of what I'll call mail order lawn care products on the internet in places like Facebook or just about anywhere that those ads pop up. Many of these products make it sound like they have just the ticket for you. Be very leery of these, especially if you think the promotions sound too good to be true. A small pouch of liquid attached to your garden hose and sprayed over your lawn is NOT going to give you enough nitrogen to meet your lawn's needs. Lawn fertilizer applications need to apply about a pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet per application. Mail order liquid based products I've looked at apply an ounce or two only. Before you purchase any mail order lawn care product come and talk to me. You likely can get better and more appropriate for less money from a local source! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.