

## Pruning Fruit Trees

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Somehow we are rapidly approaching February. February and early March are a good time for fruit tree pruning although we can really prune anytime during the dormant season as long as the temperature is above freezing. Frozen wood can cause issues when we prune so we just want to avoid that for the health of the tree. The whole purpose of fruit tree pruning is to control size, remove dead or undesirable growth and limit potential fruit bearing branches so that you have fewer fruit but larger fruit. The different species of trees are pruned differently and exactly how can not be explained in one of these programs. We have good bulletins on fruit tree pruning that you can pick up at the Extension Office or online. I can also visit with you about the how's and why's of fruit tree pruning. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Do I Need A Preventative Grub Treatment

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Over all the years that I've been on this job I've averaged less than 1 lawn per year that has had a serious grub problem. So here's the rub, as Shakespeare liked to say. There are literally tons upon tons of pesticides applied to lawns every year for grub prevention that aren't needed. Every lawn has a few grubs, that's a fact of life. If a serious problem develops it can usually be detected early enough that rescue treatments can be applied. If you have an average home lawn I would not apply a grub treatment or pay to have a preventative grub treatment applied. Don't be pressured into buying services that you don't need. Just wait until a problem develops. If you're going to have problems it'll show up in late summer with turf spots starting to die out and peel back like a cheap carpet when you grab and pull. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Ice on Trees

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. If it's winter in Kansas you are going to, at least once, have enough freezing rain to start coating outdoor surfaces including plants. We've already seen it this winter. As the ice builds up, the limbs on trees start sagging lower and lower. A little breeze blows through and the ice cracks and pops. If enough ice builds up, limbs start breaking. There are few things eerier in the midst of an ice storm than to hear the literal explosion of wood as a branch fails and comes breaking down. There is nothing that you can do, once the ice storm starts, to help. In fact trying to do anything with that tree until the storm is over and the ice has melted, is dangerous. You can be killed by a falling limb. Most trees will survive ice storms just fine. If there is cleanup to be done or damage to prune up after, do it well after the storm. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Ice on Bushes

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Yesterday we talked about ice storms and trees, today ice storms and bushes or shrubs. Bushes are made up of many small stems. It isn't uncommon to see these plants splayed all over or even flat during an ice storm. There is a very strong urge in many homeowners to try to help by going out and attempting to knock the ice off the bushes when this happens. This is foolish and a mistake. Because of the limberness of most shrubs, even evergreens, they will sag down under the ice and a few days after the ice melts, they will return to their pre-storm form. In your effort to help and knock ice off, you will often wind up breaking branches that would have been just fine otherwise. Sure, there isn't the personal risk of a branch falling on your with shrubs, but your help honestly isn't needed, just stay inside! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Tomato Types

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. When you start looking at tomato varieties you'll usually find a descriptor word of determinate, indeterminate or semi-determinate. So what do these mean? They refer to the growth habit of the tomato cultivar. Remember that originally tomatoes were a vining crop that grew all over the place. Some of the heirloom varieties are still that way. Early tomatoes were virtually all indeterminate types. They grew to a certain time, then started blooming and bearing and they just kept growing. For a home garden this is fine. Determinate varieties grow to a certain size and then set a whole bunch of fruit at once. This is better for commercial machine harvest or for someone that wants a lot of tomatoes ready at once. Semi-determinate or in between and do a little of both. All are good cultivars, they just grow differently! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.