

## Gardening with Chuck Programs for January 27 - February 2, 2020

### Fruit Trees and Frost, Part I

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Having fruit trees in your own yard can, and I emphasize can, provide you with wonderfully tasty fresh fruit during the summer and fall. The problem is that our weather is extremely variable which is a problem because potential fruit production can be literally nipped in the bud by untimely cold weather. Contrary to what many people think it usually isn't cold weather during winter that's the problem, but a frost or freeze as the plants are about to bloom or are in full bloom. At that stage a few hours of 30 or 31 degrees can really hurt fruit set or eliminate it completely. Some species, like sweet cherries, apricots and peaches are very prone to breaking dormancy early and getting nipped. Tart cherries, apples and pears are usually later blooming and can be far more reliable. Tomorrow, site selection can help! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Fruit Trees and Frost, Part II

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Many homeowners know that cold weather can be an issue with home fruit trees. But then their logic goes topsy turvy. They plant their fruit trees on the south side of their house where they think it will be warmer. The problem is that it is warmer. It's warmer much earlier. Which causes the tree to break dormancy earlier setting it up for a greater likelihood of being zapped by a frost or freeze. You want to choose a site where the snow is slow to melt in the winter and spring but gets full sun in the summer time. So take a year to figure out where this is. Take some pictures of the last place that snow melts and then check it for sunlight in June and July. You want the ground, and thereby the roots, to stay cold so it'll hold dormancy longer. You want it blooming late, to reduce exposure to cold temperatures. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Disease Resistant American Elms

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. American elms are classic beautiful American shade trees. While Dutch Elm Disease has cleared over 90% of them out of our landscapes there are still enough around that you can appreciate their stately beauty. Over the years a lot of time has been spent selecting American Elms that appear to have true resistance to Dutch elm disease. The cultivars Valley Forge, Princeton and New Harmony have shown 100% survival in long term tests. Valley Forge and Princeton have had minimal damage to leaf feeding insect pests and they've showed fair strength to resist breaking in wind and ice storms and both have great growth. New Harmony was bothered by insects more, but had better strength and a more upright style of growth. The cultivar Lewis and Clark has about 80% survival but good strength in storms. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Starting Trees off Right, Part I

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. One thing that I see happen a lot in home landscapes are trees planted that are doomed to fail for any one of a number of reasons. So let's spent today and tomorrow talking about how to start trees off right. The first step is to select the right tree for the right place. Site location is crucial before you start tree shopping. Too often people want a particular species of tree and they plant it where they have room. Determine the site, all the considerations of light, wind, proximity to everything and then shop for that right tree. When you are ready to plant, dig a hole 2 to 3 times bigger than the root mass. Digging up this much area your new tree's roots have a better chance of working their way out of the root ball. Always be sure to remove all wire and burlap and if roots are circling around, cut them apart. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Starting Trees off Right, Part II

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Continuing our discussion of starting a tree off right. Plant the tree so the root flares are at ground level. Even small trees are already developing root flares. Make a little bit of a well to make it easier to water the tree but then cover that area with an organic mulch. Not fabric and rock but an organic bark mulch that's 3 to 4 inches deep. That mulch needs to be at a uniform depth but not touching the trunk of the tree and not mounded up. You want a doughnut not a volcano. Maintain this mulch zone out three feet in all directions around the tree for eternity. The biggest competition to young trees is grass so just keep it away. Lastly do not fertilize for the first year or two but water weekly for the first couple of years IF it doesn't rain. If you can accomplish all of these things, your tree will have the best chance of survival. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.