

Gardening with Chuck Programs for March 9 - 15, 2020

Planting Wildflower Areas

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We've seen a movement over the past 10 to 15 years of trying to create landscape areas that are a mini prairie or at the very least a nice patch of wildflowers. Many gardeners aren't prepared for what they get however. Some wildflowers are annuals and some are perennials. Some plantings include some of the prairie grasses in with the wildflowers, But you need to remember one thing - it takes time. If you are used to having a perfect looking flowerbed 6 weeks after planting, you're in for a shock. In fact the first year or two it may look like a weed patch. Fertilizing, in the hope of getting more growth often just results in healthier weeds. You'll probably need to spend some time handweeding and then develop an extra dose of patience. I have some great tips for starting a wildflower patch, free for the asking. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Blueberries

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Many homeowners and gardeners love blueberries, If you take the time to look at the range map of where blueberries are native, you'll see that Kansas isn't one of those locations. Blueberries are probably the most challenging fruit crop to grow in Kansas and I quite frankly discourage even trying. We have the wrong soil and the wrong climate. Those two wrongs do not make a right. IF you are still not deterred then ask for our handout on growing blueberries in Kansas. You will need to carefully pick a spot that is protected from hot southwest summer winds but still gets full sun. You will need to make extensive modifications to the soil where you plant your blueberries and add a lot of sulfur to acidify the soil. Then pay close attention to watering. By then, it's often easier to go to the grocery store. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Blueberries in Containers

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. If after yesterday's discouraging talk of growing blueberries you still want to try, why not consider growing them in containers. With a container you can use a 50/50 mix of potting soil, never Kansas dirt, and peat moss. It becomes easier to maintain an acid pH. It will mean regular watering and fertilizing, as in watering nearly every day in the middle of summer. It also means you may have to anchor them so they don't blow over but you also need to protect from southwest winds. Chose cultivars like Top Hat, Northsky and North Country. Lastly, even though blueberries are very cold tolerant, it's different when they are in a pot. Plan to move your blueberry containers into an unheated attached garage for the winter or bury them in the soil in early November. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Get Peaches Sprayed

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Buds are swelling fast and if you haven't gotten your peach trees sprayed yet for peach leaf curl you are just about out of time. Peach leaf curl is the disease that makes peach leaves pucker up, turn red and yellow and fall off about 6 weeks after they come out. While it won't kill the tree directly it will impact fruit production and in the long run weaken the tree. The leaves are infected as the buds break open in the spring. To prevent it you need to have a fungicide applied prior to bud break. You need to use a fungicide that contains chlorothalonil and has peach trees on the label. Mix it according to label directions and spray on a day with temperatures above 50 degrees. You want to thoroughly cover the entire tree especially all the small branches. Spray now because once the disease shows up, it's too late! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Spring Grass Seeding

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Seeding grass in the spring is much harder to get a successful stand than seeding in the fall. If you need to seed grass this spring get it done soon and preferably before April 15th. Spring seeding is placing the seed into cold soil so it takes longer for the seed to germinate and start growing. With a September seeding you are putting seed into warm soil so it sprouts quickly and then has a couple of months of great growing conditions. Planting now we just hope we have enough good growing weather before summer heat hits so we get a root system developed. There's also much less weed competition in the fall. Planting now we are just asking for serious crabgrass competition. If you need to get some seed planted, certainly get it done but do it as soon as possible and be ready to water! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.