

Gardening with Chuck Programs for November 2 - 8, 2020

So Sudden So Cold

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I grew up in a church in a small Nebraska town that had a lot of Swedes in it. I always enjoyed talking with the older gentlemen and I remember one early cold snap and one gentleman said, "so sudden so cold". That phrase has stayed with me for decades and it well describes what happened in recent days. Fortunately it didn't get as cold as it could have and it moderated quickly enough. The cold wasn't cold enough to cause serious damage to perennials. You've noticed a lot of leaves dropping in the past week and it was an abrupt end to the growing season. If you hadn't brought tender houseplants in yet you may well have lost them - just bring them in and see what happens. Tender perennials that didn't get dug like canna's can still be dug. And stay tuned tomorrow for suggestion on late season weed killers. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Late Season Herbicide Applications

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. In spite of the somewhat abrupt end to the growing season, those winter annual weeds that bloom so pretty in the early spring ARE still growing and with the moisture we've had will do so with even more vigor. You still have time to treat those spring flowering weeds that are growing but you need to remember a few things. Herbicides work best when plants are actively growing. If you can, wait until there's been a couple of days with sunshine and temperatures above 50 degrees. Follow the directions on the bottle of herbicide or the bag of weed and feed. If you are spraying a liquid, wait until the afternoon when it is above 50 degrees. If you are using a weed and feed product you probably need to apply when leaves are wet. But just get it done sometime in the next couple of weeks! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Late Season Nitrogen on Turf

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. If you've only fertilized your cool season lawns once, then a second application this month would help a lot. If you haven't fertilized your lawn at all, and you want a good healthy green get it fertilized by the end of the month. If you wanted to do a weed and feed type product, great! The key nutrient that we need to get applied in this application is nitrogen. Nitrogen goes into the soil readily, is quickly taken up by the plant and then it sits there and holds it within the plant until late February or early March when it'll start to use it. The other thing that nitrogen will do right now is encourage root development in the weeks ahead. Cool season grasses don't go totally dormant and the roots will grow during warm spells. So check your fertilizer and make sure that first number is bigger than the others. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Mum Care, After the Freeze

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Mums can withstand light frosts in the early part of autumn. But the low 20s we had last week probably pretty well froze them and shut them down. They'll hold some color for a while but their season is pretty well done. So what do we do with them? Do we cut them off or let them stand? While mums are pretty winter hardy, have some kind of cover over the crowns of those plants. I like to just leave all my foliage on my mums through the winter. The old plant catches leaves and snow. It may provide some food for wildlife and even an overwintering location for some insects. If you decide that you want to trim it back only cut it back to 2 or 3 inches tall, not flush with the ground. This also helps provide a little cover. Also consider applying mulch to help protect the crowns of the plants from extremes. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Watering Lines Winter Prep

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. In most years we have a few mornings of light frosts to kind of get our attention before it gets really cold.

Well, this year it just sort of went to really cold really fast. I had the foresight, or rather my wife did, to get the hoses disconnected and drained before those low 20 temperatures. If you didn't get your hoses disconnected, get them disconnected now. They may well still be fine and let them drain out then put them away for the winter. Even though they are drained, having them out of sunlight will reduce weathering and help your hoses last longer. If you had not gotten your irrigation system drained yet, there is still time to get the system drained. Main water lines of those systems are deep enough that they didn't freeze but hopefully your sprinkler heads drained out well enough. But don't wait any longer! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.