

Gardening with Chuck Programs for October 12 - 18, 2020

Start Getting Bird Feeders Filled

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We are almost to the middle of October and many of our winter time backyard birds are starting to filter into the area. Things like Juncos and Harris's Sparrows and of course not a migrant but the indomitable goldfinches. It's time to start getting the feeders filled. I'm not a big fan of the seed mixes and if you have any kind of hanging or elevated feeder, use black oil sunflower. IF you have a ground feeder then go ahead and use seed mixes. Bird species that feed on the ground readily use the seeds that are in the seed mixes. Now, one word of warning, activity at the backyard feeders often starts off slow in the fall because there is so much natural food supplies out there, think weed seeds. Some years it may not pick up until January, unless we have an early snow. But just be patient, the birds are coming! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Prepping Ornamental Grasses for Winter

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I don't know about you, but my ornamental grass, a.k.a. pampas grass, went nuts this year. Full and tall and lots of seed heads. It really is quite amazing. If these clumps of ornamental grasses are well away from the house or buildings you can just leave them alone for the winter and let them serve as shelter for some little critters. However, if grasses are next to your house or a building it would be advisable to reduce them greatly in size as they can be a real fire hazard. If you've ever burned a clump of this stuff off in the spring you know what I mean. As the grasses go dormant you can trim them back to greatly reduce the risk of fire. Ultimately, this fall, I wouldn't want to trim those clumps back any lower than 6 inches. Take care when doing this as those grass blades are sharp and the dust very itchy! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Planting Garlic

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. While many gardeners are wrapping up their gardening year, others, like me, are just gearing up. Late October is the time to plant garlic. Most people try garlic once and are unhappy with how it does because they plant it in the spring and it doesn't do very much at all. Most garlic cultivars need to be planted in the fall so it can get well established and then get an early start in late winter. This early season growth before it gets too hot is crucial for a productive crop. Work your soil up when it isn't too wet. Don't break apart your garlic bulbs to cloves until just before you plant. Then plant your garlic so the top of the bulb is about an inch deep. Each plant needs about 45 square inches. I plant mine in rows one foot apart and 6 inches between bulbs. And remember, plant the pointy end up. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Storing Summer Bulbs

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. It's far enough into October and we know that winter is on its way. It's time to get those tropical and non winter hardy bulbs out of the ground and into storage. Things like glads are tougher than say elephant ears. Start with the most tender stuff and get it out of the ground before it gets any colder. Place them in a warm dry place to dry down then carefully knock off any soil and remove the dried up plant parts remaining. This goes for all the root parts you are bringing in. The next step is crucial - you can dust with a fungicidal powder if you want but you need to pack the plant parts in peat moss and don't let them touch each other. By separating with peat moss, you reduce the risk of a rot organism skipping one to the other in storage. Then place the box in a semi-warm dry place until next spring. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Weed and Feed

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We are past the middle of October, barely. We've had some pretty good conditions and based on my yard there are lots of little broadleaf weeds that have started growing. As the soil is cooling off it is unlikely we'll get too many more sprouting and growing. So anytime in the next month is a good time to apply weed and feed products OR a broadleaf weed control product. At this time either the granular weed and feed or liquid herbicide treatments are going to work great. Cooler temperatures will cause them to work slower, but they'll work well none the less. As we move on into November the liquid treatments may be preferred. Be sure to apply the liquids when temperatures are above 50 degrees. For the weed and feed granular products please read and follow all label directions. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.