

## Gardening with Chuck Programs for October 19 - 25, 2020

### Take it Easy on the Cleanup

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Gardeners, speaking from personal experience, can be a bit obsessive about cleaning up the yard and garden in the fall. In some cases, especially vegetable gardens, I fully support this obsession. But in much of the rest of the yard and especially in perennial beds, it's sometimes better to just let things go until spring. Many critters, both birds, insects and mammals, make great use of that dying down and dead plant material. Many of these perennials have seeds that the birds will eat. Standing plants will catch leaves and snow that can help temper winter's extreme temperatures. Many butterflies depend on this residue to establish their pupa in. Even the old stems of things like sunflowers, and goldenrod can provide shelter or food. So just go enjoy a football game and leave the cleanup for spring. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Put the Saws and Trimmers Away

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. From now on until late winter, the only kind of pruning or trimming I want to see on woody plants is one cut pruning to completely remove a tree. When you make pruning cuts on a tree or shrub it normally begins to immediately heal through several different processes. From now until late winter though, woody plants are pretty much just sitting there and the healing process won't begin until new growth starts in the spring. Those wounds from pruning and trimming will basically just sit there like an open sore for months. While we aren't at high risk for a lot of disease organisms to infect those pruning wounds, it's just better to try to avoid these situations. There'll be plenty of time come March to take care of this. If you truly want to do something, take some time to water those evergreens though! It's dry! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Controlling Bush Honeysuckle

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. If you notice shrubs on the periphery of your yard or timber that still have lots of green leaves and little red berries, then you are likely looking at Asian bush honeysuckle and now would be a good time to get that invasive pest out of your yard. Bush honeysuckle is very invasive and can get so thick in the understory of our native woodlands that they crowd out any other native seedlings trying to get started. If you have a lot of these then you can spray them with glyphosate right now and get effective control. While this works good out in the timber, I wouldn't try this in your yard. For bush honeysuckle growing in your yard, cut it off at ground level this fall and treat the freshly cut surface with concentrated glyphosate. I'd prefer a product with at least 30% concentrate. Apply directly on the entire cut surface. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Time to Consider Replacing Ornamental Pears

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I'm starting to suggest something rather drastic. If you have ornamental pear trees, like Bradford pears, in your yard, cut them down, remove them and replace them with something else. When many of these trees were planted they were fruitless. Over time that has changed. Give me a call and I can explain why that has happened. But these small fruits are eaten by wildlife and when the seeds pass through the critter, they grow like weeds. I can show you locations around our region that are becoming choked with volunteer pear trees and they are nasty. Cutting down these trees is the only solution. We have many very good flowering crabapple trees to use in place of these pears and they do not have the same problem. We have a great bulletin about flowering crabs, but first we have to get rid of the pears! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Start Fall Weed Control

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Last week I talked about weed and feed programs so I want to follow that up talking about fall weed control in lawns in general. Now is the time to control all those weeds that will bloom early next spring. They are small, not very noticeable just yet and that makes them easy to control. A couple things to note though. If you have a heavy leaf cover, try to get those leaves mowed over and mulched down so the herbicide can get to the weed leaves. Also, if your yard appears to be really drought stressed then the weeds are probably stressed too and may not be well controlled. If you can water consider doing that first OR wait until we've had a quarter inch of rain or more. It won't take much rain to perk those little weeds up but if they aren't actively carrying on photosynthesis, herbicide control will be lacking! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.