

Gardening with Chuck Programs for April 12 - 18, 2021

No Ornamental Pears!!!

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Over the past week or two I'm sure you've seen some stunning trees blooming white. No leaves, just limbs and lots of white blossoms. These are ornamental pears. They can go by several names including Callery Pears, Bradford Pears and other names, but we'll just lump them all together as ornamental pears. I have to admit that they look impressive, stunning at times. But PLEASE don't plant one. In fact, if you have any in your yard, consider cutting them down and replacing them with some other flowering tree. In the past 25 years they have become an invasive weed. They went from being fruitless to being loaded with fruit which the birds plant all over the place. And the volunteer pears will form very dense thickets and the volunteer trees will often have short stiff thorn like branches. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Container Flower Rules

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Using large containers of all kinds to plant flowers and ornamentals in are a great way to put splashes of color and blooms in virtually any outdoor space. I watched a friend do a program recently and he said to follow three rules when planting these. Have a filler, a spiller and a thriller. The filler is what fills in and covers a lot of the base of the pot - often it can be things like petunias. A spiller is something that cascades down the sides or out of whatever container you are using. This could be almost any trailing plant like sweet potato vine. The last one, the thriller, is going to be something that gives you more height. It could be a dracena like spike, just about anything green that grows up. Often this isn't a flowering plant. The whole idea is to give the visual effect of being bigger than the container that it is in. We do this at our house, okay my wife does this, and it really does look great! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Flowering Weeds in Lawns

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. If you're lawn is like 95% of the ones I've seen around town, you likely have some pretty little blooming plants in parts of your lawn where there should just be green. The henbit, that's the purple one, has been outstanding this year, but dandelions, speedwell and chickweed are doing well in their own right. All of these sprout and start growing in the fall and then explode in late winter and very early spring. Most of them will die before the 4th of July and will produce a lot of seeds that will be laying their ready to sprout next fall. Even if you spray now, they'll produce seed if they are already blooming. Go ahead and mark your calendar to treat after October 15th. Then spend the rest of the growing season getting your lawn in better shape by mowing tall, fertilizing and seeding in thin spots. Cover up the bare soil so it doesn't grow weeds. Or, just enjoy the splash of early color and let them grow! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Fertilizing Fruit Trees

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Fruit trees, even mature fruit trees, should be fertilized annually. If you have lawn around your fruit trees, the grass is going to grab lawn fertilizers first so you need to make a concerted effort to apply extra fertilizer under the drip line of the tree. Use a high nitrogen fertilizer. Lawn fertilizers will work as long as they don't contain weed killers or crabgrass preventers. Or use something like Ammonium Sulfate - but the first number should be bigger than the second and third. For 1 and 2 year old trees use 1/4 cup per tree, for 3 to 4 year old trees apply 1/2 cup per tree, for 5 to 10 year old trees use 1 to 2 cups per tree and after ten years of age use 2 to 3 cups. If you use something that has a nitrogen rate of less than 20% you probably need to double these rates or triple if it's 10% or less. If you know from a soil test that you need phosphorus then use something like a 10-10-10 or 13-13-13. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Planting Easter Lilies

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Many people enjoy buying an Easter Lily to have in the house for Easter. But now that Easter's over, what do you do with it? While maybe not reliably hardy, Easter lilies will survive, at least a few years, when planted outdoors. Once the flower fades clip it off so it doesn't try to make seed. Then keep the plant inside until about Mother's Day. Keep it watered, but not soggy and give it a little fertilizer. If your soil is heavy, remove about half the soil in the area you want to plant the lily and replace it with peat moss. They are going to do best in full sun. Plant the bulb about six inches deep and if you have more than one, plant them 12 to 18 inches apart and then water them in. Use mulch to conserve moisture and after it dies down in the fall, cover the plant with straw, pine needles, wood chips or other mulch, about 3 to 4 inches deep. Uncover in the spring, fertilize as needed and enjoy! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.