

## Gardening with Chuck Programs for August 16 - 22, 2021

### Leaf Issues on Ash and Lilacs

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. In case you haven't noticed it, lilacs and green ash trees both are looking really bad right now. But there's nothing you can or should be doing right now. But don't worry, the plants aren't dying and there's nothing that you can or should be doing about it right now. The two plants are suffering from different diseases with somewhat unpronounceable names. The two diseases are similar in that they only show up when we have humid weather earlier in the growing season. The leaves are infected at that time but don't really start to become noticeable until later in the summer, or now! The good news is that the plants are in good shape and have already stored up adequate food reserves in their roots. The bad news is that they look bad. With cooler weather and rainfall they may releaf yet this summer. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Plant A Salad Garden

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We are into the second half of August and the growing season is slipping away rapidly. But. If you aren't totally tired of gardening yet there is still time to plant a salad garden. A salad garden is best described as vegetables that you'd put in a salad, duh! Specifically I'm talking about lettuce, spinach, radishes and turnips. All four of these are short enough season crops with enough cold tolerance that they can be planted clear into mid September with normal expectations that you can harvest well into late October and possibly even early November. Just a couple of things to keep in mind. Plant the seeds just a little bit deeper than you would in the spring. The soils are warm and dry out quickly so you need a little bit more soil cushion. Fertilize about three weeks after emergence. Keep the water on these crops if it doesn't rain. And remember that weeds will be coming fast and furious! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Harvesting Pears

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Pears, and I mean European pears, not Asian pears, are kind of an odd fruit. Most people's opinion of what a pear should taste like comes down to a Bartlett pear. In fact most people, if they buy a pear that isn't a Bartlett, think that something is wrong with it. Be that as it may, most pears need to be picked early and not allowed to ripen on the tree. Pears ripen from the inside out, will tend to turn mushy and develop hard grit cells in the flesh if allowed to ripen on the tree. It can be a bit of a trick to know when to harvest pears but a few things to look for include: when the lenticels, which are breathing pores on the skin of the fruit turn from a white or greenish to brown it's getting close. When the fruit parts easily from the branch when it is lifted and twisted is a good sign and the best sign is to simply see if it has developed the characteristic smell and taste. Then harvest and let it ripen inside. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Grass Seed Selection

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Fall, September especially, is the time to plant new lawns. Walking into the lawn and garden section of a hardware store or big box store, which is where most people buy their grass seed, can be a bit overwhelming with 3 pound bags of seed saying sunny this or shady that or high use whatever. What you need to know is that most of these bags of seed have a high percentage of grass varieties that aren't the best for our climates. You want tall fescue or Kentucky bluegrass. You don't want perennial ryegrass or creeping red fescue or anything else. Tall fescue OR Kentucky bluegrass. Turn the bag over and look for the contents label. It'll tell you what percent by weight the different grasses make up. When you find one that's all bluegrass or tall fescue you are in business IF the tag also says "other crop seed" is 0%. Other crop seed usually means orchardgrass and you don't want that in your lawn. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Twig Dieback on Oak

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. If you have an oak, especially one of the red oaks, you may have noticed some twig tips that appear dead. They are in fact dead but it's nothing to worry about. I see some every year especially in pin oaks and other red oaks. It's a disease called botryosphaeria canker. The disease moves into small branches usually from some minor wound from an insect or hail damage. The disease kills a small area, called a canker and since it's a small branch the canker usually goes all the way around the twig cutting off the flow of nutrients and water and the leaves and branch tip die. While it may be noticeable and unsightly it's really very very minor and we do not recommend any sort of fungicide application. Normally the dead leaves and twig tips stay on the tree for a while - they will eventually fall off but maybe not for a year or so. If they really bother you can prune the dead tips off. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.