

Peony Leaf Issues

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Boy are my peony leaves looking sad. They've got measles bad. Some of them also have powdery mildew. Know what I'm going to do about it? Nothing! The reddish brown spots on the leaves are the measles and the plants were infected back in May. All you can do now is to carefully cut the plants off in late August or September and carefully remove all the foliage to a burn pile or trash. The disease overwinters on old leaf material so getting that stuff out of the peony bed early this year will reduce severity next year. Powdery mildew could be treated but most peonies have all the nutrients stored up in their roots now so you aren't really doing much good by spraying. By mid August the peony plants have shut down so you can cut the foliage off at that time with no harm to next year's blooms. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Lilac Leaf Issues

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Yesterday I was talking about peony leaves looking pretty bad and today, the same topic with lilacs. A lot of lilacs are looking pretty tough right now - some from powdery mildew and others with just a lot of partially brown leaves or just flat out missing leaves. Much of this is from Cercospora leaf spot. I've seen some stems in some bushes that are devoid of leaves. Like all plant disease issues this one only shows up if we have the right weather conditions which is wet and humid. The infection period was weeks ago so spraying now wouldn't do any good. Again, sanitation this fall would help in getting all the inoculum loaded dead leaves out from around the shrubs. You could also spray with a myclobutanil fungicide, there's several, on a regular basis next spring and early summer. But it may be a waste of time since if we don't have the right weather conditions we won't have the disease anyway! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Cicada Killers

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. It's the time of year when the giant fierce looking wasps known as cicada killers are being seen, I saw my first one a couple of weeks ago. Cicada killers are very large wasps, over an inch and a half with a black body and yellow marks on the thorax and abdomen and the wings are reddish orange. They are a solitary species. The female finds cicadas and stings them to paralyze them then struggles to get them back to her nest, a hole in the ground, where she places it in a brood chamber and lays one egg on every two cicadas as food for the young. Females rarely sting, only if harassed, but males will often swarm around where there are females to mate with trying to establish dominance. They will fly around you and chase other males. While they are big and look threatening, the males have no stinger. They are all bluff. Once they are through laying eggs they will feed on nectar and pollen. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Last Warm Season Grass Fertilization

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. If you have zoysia or especially Bermuda grass for your lawn, then it isn't uncommon to fertilize these grasses during the summer, basically just the opposite of cool season grass lawns. These warm season grasses grow actively during the heat of summer so summer fertilization is very helpful to them. However, once we get into September with the shorter days these grasses start shutting down rapidly on the way to going into winter dormancy. Fertilizing these too late into August can stimulate growth that won't have a chance to harden off before winter dormancy which in turn can cause higher than normal winter damage. General rule of thumb is that we don't fertilize those warm season grasses, including Buffalograss, after August 15th. If you have cool season lawns then you certainly want to be ready to fertilize in early September however, as these grasses start to increase their growth. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Keep Watering New Landscape Plants

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We've had some timely rains and we've had some wicked heat this summer. Trees and shrubs that were planted in 2021 or even just in the past couple of years need special attention still. It can take several years for woody ornamentals to get a good root system established. While a mature plant can withstand periods of drought, these newer planted trees need regular soil moisture on about a weekly basis to the tune of 10 to 20 gallons a week if it doesn't rain at least an inch a week. You can use a slow running open hose, you can use a soaker hose OR a rather ingenious method involving 5 gallon buckets. Drill a 1/8 inch hole in the side of the bucket right above the bottom. Set it next to the tree or shrub and fill it up with water. It will slowly dribble out. Once it's empty you can move it to the other side of the tree and repeat it. This method eliminates the need to remember to turn off that hose! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.