

Gardening with Chuck Programs for August 30 - September 5, 2021

Fall Webworms

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Fall webworms are starting to show up. These are the fuzzy caterpillars that eat tree leaves and make those big webby messy masses at the ends of the branches in tree. In reality we are moving into the second generation of fall webworm, but the first generation is so minimal in comparison that nobody every notices it. But the second generation is hatching and they will gather in large groups on the ends of tree branches with lots of leaves, enclose those leaves in webbing so they can safely feed on those leaves. The damage they do to trees is minimal and doesn't affect the tree health. Their big impact is all aesthetic as those webby masses will stick around well into winter. Spraying insecticides is tough because of the webbing so just ignore. However, people cutting these out of trees do more harm than the insects do! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Bagworms Done for the Season

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I feel, for the most part, with one or two exceptions, that bagworm problems were far less this year than in the past several years. In general I saw nothing to make me think that next year will be worse. If you just now realized that you have had bagworms, don't rush out to do anything as they are through feeding. In the next few weeks the adult male moths will emerge and find the females who never really leave their little bag. They'll mate and she will fill the bag up with eggs and die. That bag is pretty resistant to everything except fire and the trash can. If you find bags on your trees and shrubs you can spend time this fall pulling the bags off and throwing them in the burn pile or putting them in a trash bag and tying it shut. Merely picking them off and dropping them on the ground won't help at all! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

September an Important Lawn Care Month

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. September AND October are probably the two most important months for your cool season lawn. As the weather cools down the fescue and bluegrass lawns slowly come back to life and grow vigorously. What you do with them over these two months can make all the difference in how they look next spring and summer. Well, here it is, early September so get a plan together. If you need to core aerate or dethatch your yard, the former needs to be done far more often than the latter, then do that the first thing. Then fertilize with a high nitrogen fertilizer and if you need to overseed do that as early in September as possible. If we don't get some good early month rains, an irrigation or two would be very helpful. It is still far too early for broadleaf weed control. Fall weed control needs to be done in the last half of October. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Tips for Seeding Lawns

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. For germination of grass seed to occur most successfully you must have good seed to soil contact. Throwing grass seed over the top of your lawn and hoping something happens is not going to get the job done. If you are overseeding you can core aerate and then broadcast some seed or use a power seeder, sometimes known as a slit seeder with vertical spinning knives that slice into the soil surface and then drop seed right in behind it. If you are planting an entire new lawn you can use that same power seeder OR till up the entire area, broadcast seed and then rake it into the soil. Regardless of the method you use, if it doesn't rain you'll need to water it to get it up. You just need to keep the soil surface damp, not waterlogged, but you may have to water it twice a day to keep up in hotter weather. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Use the Right Seeding Rates

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Other than not getting grass seed into good seed to soil contact, the other most common mistake made by homeowners in seeding a lawn is to not have the right rate. Too low of a seeding rate and it will be spotty and clumpy. Too high of a seeding rate and it may look great for a few weeks but then the competition between the grass plants starts to kill off most of the grass and you have an ugly mess. Tall fescue is a larger seed than Kentucky bluegrass so you need to plant more pounds of fescue. New lawn fescue seeding rates are 6 to 8 pounds per 1,000 square feet (about 32 by 32 feet) and 2 to 3 pounds per 1,000 square feet of Kentucky bluegrass. If you are overseeding a lawn to just help thicken it up, then cut those rates in half. And make sure that you are using good quality seed of preferred types! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.