

## Gardening with Chuck Programs for August 9 - 15, 2021

### Get Ready for New Lawn Seeding

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Without a doubt the best time for seeding a new lawn or overseeding an existing lawn is the month of September.

The soil is warm so grass seed will germinate as rapidly as possible and then as the weather cools down the grass really thrives and gets well established before winter dormancy.

September will be here before you know it so if you are planning to do some seeding or overseeding start getting ready now. Secure your seed, tall fescue or Kentucky bluegrass, do a soil test to make sure you don't need to adjust pH and to see if starter fertilizer is needed and start doing any soil work you need to do. You can till up the yard and have a fresh seedbed or my preference is to just mow low and use a power seeder. If you have tough perennial weeds, like bermudagrass, you need to be spraying those now with glyphosate! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Mimosa Webworm

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. It isn't uncommon for honeylocusts to start showing leaves that look brown this time of year. The most common cause of this is an insect known as the mimosa webworm. These little caterpillars like to mat leaves together with webbing which allows them to feed in relative security. From a distance all you see is brown leaves but on closer inspection you'll see the webbing. The good thing is that if this damage is just now showing up, it's late enough in the season that it really isn't doing any damage. It's unsightly but the tree has stored up sufficient food reserves for winter already. If it's an annual issue that really bothers you AND you have a sprayer that can reach the top of the tree you can treat for the insect but you need to start spraying much sooner in the year. I'd recommend starting to treat right after the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Many lawn and garden insecticides are labeled for control. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Lace Bugs and Plant Bugs

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. If you start looking on the undersides of most any deciduous tree leaves right now you will likely see a whole slew of little insects. We sometimes call these plant bugs but lace bugs are usually what I'm seeing. These little insects really build up in numbers and can be very numerous on many tree species including oaks, redbuds, sycamore, elms and others. The feeding is often apparent by yellow stippling on the upper leaf surface and often accounts for the "tired" look that many trees develop in the late summer. If you brush up against these leaves you may wind up with dozens of these insects on you. They have prickly little legs that may stick you as they walk around and occasionally one may even stick their mouthpart into you to see if you are edible, which can hurt a little, but not like a mosquito. These little insects do provide a lot of food for birds and while a nuisance, don't really hurt the tree. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Digger Wasps and Solitary Bees

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. While most people are familiar with hornets or honeybees or bumblebees, we also have dozens of species of bees and wasps around us every summer. Most of these are solitary species that really aren't a threat and most all are highly beneficial. Mud daubers, for example, capture almost exclusively spiders to pack into their nests for the young to feed on. Most of these solitary bees and wasps also feed on nectar and pollen so provide very necessary pollination services - it isn't just honeybees by the way!! Some nest in hollow stems in twigs or weeds but a lot of them nest in the ground. While it may be unsettling to see "a bee" excavating a hole in some dry soil, and you may be tempted to cause harm to the bee before it does to you, keep in mind that these solitary species are not defensive. Just leave them alone and let them do their valuable job. We'll all be better for it! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Sudden Vine Collapse

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. There are times when a gardeners heart just sinks. One of those times is when they walk out to their garden and find one of their hills of various vine crops has a plant or two that the vine has literally collapsed overnight. While these issues can affect almost any vining crop, watermelon are probably least affected. The two most common causes are bacterial wilt and squash vine borer. You have to be proactive because once the symptoms show up it's too late to do anything. Bacterial wilt is carried by cucumber beetles so you want to try to control them. If a vine crop suddenly collapses you are best off to pull it up and get it out of the area. And keep treating for squash bugs whether you are seeing them or not. Squash vine borers have one generation per year and overwinter as a pupa in the ground. Fall tillage destroys these critters so I'm a firm believer in doing this for them and grasshoppers! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.