

Overwintering Perennials in Pots

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Something that people ask me about regularly is growing perennial plants, or at least plants that live through the winter, in some kind of container or raised bed. I am not really high on this kind of thing because it is easy to lose plants that are normally quite hardy in our area to winter damage, either freezing or dessication. What people don't realize is how much temperature moderating ability soil has. Even though we may have ground frozen down 18 to 24 inches in harsh winters, the temperature 3 or 4 inches down often isn't much colder than mid 20s if even that cold. But when you have an elevated container, suddenly that cold can start to penetrate in from all sides and may approach air temperature. Plants that may be hardy in the ground at 5 degrees suddenly freeze out unless those pots are moved inside a garage. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Dormant Seeding of Turfgrass

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Every time I think we are finally moving into a weather cool down that'll really get us into late fall or early winter weather, in comes another front with south winds and warm temperatures. With that said, the soil temperature is dropping down to the point that we can do dormant seeding of cool season lawn grasses. Dormant seeding is pretty much just like regular seeding except you do it when the soil is too cold for the grass seed to start germinating. You still have to get the seed down into the soil, but then it just sits there until spring when the soil warms up and the grass seed starts to germinate. You can literally do dormant seeding any time until about early March. Then wait until early April and start normal seeding again. Just be sure not to apply any crabgrass preventer to dormant seeded lawn areas. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Tree Seedling Order Forms

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. If you live in rural areas or have larger lots on the edge of town, and are looking for some tree or shrub planting options that won't break the bank and you are patient, then you may want to consider ordering seedlings from the Kansas Forest Service. These are seedlings, usually 12 to 18 inches tall and you have to order 25 of the same species, but the price is sure right! They also have multiple species bundles for wildlife or pollinators that are becoming really popular. You can order the seedlings anytime from now until May 1st, but they do sell out early of some species so you may want to order early. They are shipped in boxes via UPS and I can tell you that they arrive in very good shape. If you need an order form or advice give me a call or look for Kansas Forest Service on the web. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Careful of Those Indoor Temperatures

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I know far too many people that consider it a badge of honor to not turn on the furnace in their house until Thanksgiving or even later and keep it quite cool in their homes which is admirable from an energy savings point of view, but it's not admirable if you happen to have tropical foliage house plants in your house. There are certain house plants that can handle quite cool temperatures and others that are very sensitive. Plants like Chinese evergreen, croton, false aralia, balfour aralia and ming need to have temperatures above 60 degrees, in fact above 65 for false aralia. Most other plants need to have winter temperatures above 50. Remember though that we often keep our house plants near windows for sunlight, but if windows are drafty it may drop below critical temperatures on cold nights. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Controlling Volunteer Trees in the Landscape

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Now that most leaves are off plants, except for some roses and bush honeysuckle, it is often quite easy to see volunteer trees or other woody plants. This becomes a very good time to get those volunteer trees cut down and removed or remove that nasty bush honeysuckle. However, except for cedar trees, everything else will sprout and regrow next spring if you don't treat the freshly cut stump, albeit probably a tiny little stump. Since these unwanted little trees are often growing right in with desirable foliage DO NOT use Tordon RTU. It can be taken up by the roots of desirable plants and cause damage. It is okay to use a stump killer that contains triclopyr, just be careful not to get any on the base of desirable plants. In many cases it's even better to use concentrated glyphosate. Treat within 5 minutes of cutting. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.