

Cold Weather Impact on Insects

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Does weather, especially cold winter weather, impact insects and things like ticks or spiders. The short answer is yes, but not nearly as much as you might think. We have some insect pests that do not overwinter here in Kansas. They die and reinfestation occurs in the spring as they fly in from the south. Because it got so cold so far south, it means that some pests will have to travel further to get here come spring so that may reduce or at least delay some pests developing this summer. But many of our annual pests have no problem surviving even bitterly cold weather like we just saw. Many pests, like grasshoppers, overwinter as eggs in the ground. This will have very little effect on them. Others like mosquitoes, find good overwintering areas and many of them simply have very good internal antifreeze systems. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Cold Weather Impact on Bagworms

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Yesterday we talked about impact of cold weather on insects. Today, specifically everyone's favorite, bagworm. I know a lot of people were hoping that this cold weather would put a big hit on the bagworm populations. My prediction is, no, not really, and here's why. Bagworms overwinter as eggs in the old bags of last year's female bagworms. Those eggs are very stable inside those bags. Additionally the native range of bagworm in the US, and they are native to the United States, is north into New England and even southern Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota. They survive the kind of winter we saw, and worse, every year. With that said, I do think we saw populations wane some in 2020, but we need to stay on top of this as we move into the annual treatment season of late May and June. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Damage to Fruit Trees

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Okay, we hit -18 below and possibly colder. Were fruit trees in our home orchards damaged by this cold? Well, the tree likely wasn't hurt, but some of the blossoms sure were. A fully dormant fruit tree blossom bud is pretty hardy. But at -18 we are going to see a little bit of damage. But if you think about it further, both Minnesota and Michigan raise a lot of apples every year and they see temperatures this cold, and colder, every single winter. What worries me more is the fact that March, April and May are all being forecasted to be above normal temperatures so we could see early bud development and early blooming. Then all it's going to take is one or two chilly nights and bam, the buds are frozen. It's warming up now and if you didn't spray fungicides on your peach trees yet, get it done! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Get A Garden Calendar

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Have you ever bought a packet of garden seeds and you read on the back that you should plant after all danger of frost is past. Hmmm, when is that. Or maybe they have that tiny map of the US with different colors but the map is so small you aren't sure if you're looking at Oklahoma, Kansas or Nebraska! I've got a much better option for you. We have a bulletin called the Vegetable Garden Planting Guide. Within that bulletin is a page called the vegetable garden calendar. It has columns for March through November and it shows most all of our common vegetable crops and indicates when to plant them and when you can expect to harvest them. It makes it really slick and easy to plan. Stop by for a copy of the entire four page bulletin or I'm happy to make you an 11 x 13 inch version of just that page. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Don't Let Spring Fever Get the Best of You

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. That two week cold snap was cruel to each and every gardener. I've known some people to plant peas the last week of February IF the weather had been warm. I'm not sure the ground is even totally thawed out just yet to tell you the truth. Yes, we had much nicer weather this week, sunshine and temperatures back to or over normal for the last week of February. Climate Prediction Center indicates a strong likelihood of above average temperatures through much of 2021 and below normal rainfall. But right now we are still warming up and drying out. The traditional spring garden season starts about March 15th. Even though you may have spring fever bad, real bad just stick with the standard protocol. If you worked your garden last spring you can start getting things planted soon but be patient! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.