

Gardening with Chuck Programs for July 26 - August 1, 2021

Spider Mites

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Spider mites are a real pest and they love hot dry weather. They are not an insect, but a mite - adults have eight legs. They can have a new generation every few days and the populations can just explode.

Rainy thunderstormy weather often keeps their population down by having wind driven rain that washes them off. In fact you can often keep their numbers down by just spraying a strong stream of water on the undersides of the leaves. But therein lies the problem, they feed on the undersides of leaves and we are often addressing the tops of leaves. In gardens we are pretty limited in what we can use, often malathion is about it. With ornamental we more often switch to something that has bifenthrin in it as this seems to have good control, But in the short run, honestly, just keep praying for some good thunderstorms! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Dividing Iris

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Bearded iris are a tough perennial flowering plant well suited to Kansas. But they periodically need to be dug up, divided and replanted to avoid overcrowding or just to expand a flower bed. Right now is a great time to do that up through about the middle of August. Dig up your iris and then start to cut them apart with a sharp knife. Ideally you want a Y shaped rhizome with two fans of foliage on small rhizomes attached to a larger rhizome. Discard any rhizomes that appear to have soft rot or just look funky. Replant into a weed free seed bed that has been worked up and fertilized as per a soil test. Iris don't need or like to be buried too deep. Cut the leaves back by two-thirds and plant them with the top of the rhizome just below the soil surface. Water them down good perhaps after applying a weed preventer. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Whiteflies

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. A pest we don't often see, especially outside, but for some reason we are blessed with them this year, is whiteflies. Whiteflies are small white flying insects that resemble moths. They don't overwinter in Kansas and blow in from the south so numbers often don't really start to build until later in the year, most years. This year they seemed to have gotten a jump on things. The little rascals can feed on most any plants. On vegetables you are probably limited to insecticidal soap or Neem. I'm not that big of a fan of Neem but it does work on whiteflies. On ornamentals you can use the two mentioned products as well as malathion, synthetic pyrethroids and acetamiprid. Be sure to try to get that spray up under the leaves. The last thing to remember about whiteflies is that they love to hitchhike on plants that you bring into the house to overwinter so check your plants over good in the fall! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Tired Leaves

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. As I was driving into town the other day I noticed that a lot of the trees were developing that late summer look. Leaves that a month ago were nice dark green are getting a bronzy or grayish cast to them. I noticed it on hackberries but others will look this way soon. This is actually pretty common and I see it in landscape trees too. If you walk up to these trees and start turning leaves over you'll likely notice that they are loaded with small insects, like lace bugs and plant bugs. These insects build up huge numbers as they suck sap out of the leaves leaving little dead spots on the upper sides of the leaf that give that faded and tired look. It may look bad, but the tree is okay. It's already stored up plenty of food reserves for winter. No treatment is needed plus the insects serve as protein for hummingbirds! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Fall Garden Planting

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Okay, July is all but gone and we are on the cusp of August. Time for the next round of fall garden planting. If you can find plants, there's still time for cabbage (but hurry) as well as broccoli and cauliflower. The last two you can go up through the first week of August. You can also plant kale and beets right now as well. Then wait until about the middle of the month and then we can get lettuce, spinach, turnips and radishes planted. This last group you can plant clear into and up to about the middle of September. At this time plant them just a wee bit deeper as the surface soil can still be quite warm. Water them up if it doesn't rain so they can get to work developing a root system. The first couple of weeks watering is so very crucial as they have very small root systems then. And of course, there's more than enough weed seed to sprout and cause competition. A little mulch can help deal with the weeds. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.