

Pruning Brambles

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Brambles are a general term that we use to describe raspberries and blackberries. They are a perennial shrubby or bushy plant that has biennial canes. The first year a cane grows it will not produce fruit and the second year it will fruit and then die. So you constantly have to be pruning out the old dead and dying canes after harvest, OR in the spring before new growth begins which is right now. It's generally pretty easy to differentiate between the dead canes and the live canes. Unfortunately, it's a little more complicated than that based on what kind of raspberries and blackberries you have - red, black or purple raspberries, thorny or thornless blackberries. How much pruning you do depends on what type you have. If you have brambles that need to be pruned contact me for the specific details for what you have! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Rhubarb

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I love rhubarb. I grew up on a farm with rhubarb and it's one of the earliest fresh produce that came out of our garden. From a nutritional point of view, it's kind of a nothing, but I don't care - I love the taste of it. A long lived perennial it can be a bit tricky to grow around here because our heavy soils lead it to develop crown rots. The best time to plant rhubarb is now, or maybe I should say a year from now. Because what you need to do is to take the growing season to locate your bed and then make sure it's got good drainage and then start working lots of organic matter deeply into the soil. Tilling it in 6 to 12 inches is not excessive. Double dig the bed and add compost, rotted manure, peat moss, just any organic matter than you can into the soil. Then it can settle down and you can plant your crowns next spring! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Planting Potatoes

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Folklore aside and looking just at weather and climate, St. Patrick's Day often isn't always that great of a day to be planting potatoes. But that's okay because anytime the last half of March and even early April can work just fine. In fact, you can even plant them again in late June or early July for a fall harvest in October. While potatoes can grow in cool weather, cold soils and especially cold wet soils can cause a lot of problems for seedling potatoes and can even cause the seed potato pieces to rot in the ground. So let the soil warm up a bit before you start planting. My seed potatoes are sitting in a bag in the kitchen. I'll get them cut up into seed potato pieces, which should be done a few days before planting so the cut surfaces can suberize toughen up, over this coming weekend, while I'm watching some ball games! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Cutting Back Ornamental Grasses

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. You can call them ornamental grasses, you can call them pampas grass or you can just call them that clump of big grass. Regardless, it's time to clean all that old dead vegetation out from last year. If you live out in the country and the grasses are away from buildings and the weather is allowing, and you have a burn permit, you can just set them on fire. Have a hose handy and very little wind. And a word of warning, these burn very fast and very hot. Don't be caught off guard. If fire isn't an option then get some twine, or better yet some of those elasticky bungee cords and wrap all the vegetation up tightly and then use a pruning shear, chain saw, just anything to cut that stuff off about 3 to 6 inches high. This dry vegetation is pretty sticky and itchy so wear long sleeves and stay upwind from the dust and debris! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Warm Season Grass Care

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Over the next few weeks you'll see lots of ads talking about doing this that or the other with your lawns. Keep in mind that this is for cool season lawns like fescue and bluegrass. If you have a Bermudagrass, zoysia or buffalograss lawn, for the most part you can ignore this because your lawn care season is still pretty well laid back. Definitely get out there and spot treat any broadleaf weeds like dandelions or henbit any day that the temperature is above 50 and rain isn't threatening. Then apply crabgrass preventer between April 1st and April 15th. Mowing won't really crank up until late April or early May. Early May is also when you are going to apply your first fertilization treatment on Bermuda and Zoysia. For Buffalograss make one application in early June. In the meantime, watch some basketball! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.