

## Gardening with Chuck Programs for March 8 - 14, 2021

### Spring Season Grass Seeding

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I strongly encourage homeowners who want to plant fescue or bluegrass to do it in the fall. Keeping in mind the old farmers saying that you can plant cool season grasses any month that has an R in it, those autumnal R months are much better. The reason is simple - Kansas summers. Our preferred lawn grasses are cool season grasses. They grow best in the cooler weather of autumn and spring. Once summer hits these grasses really just want to go dormant. If you plant a new lawn in April, especially late April, those young grass plants are just getting up and going about the time the heat of summer starts to build. If those young plants haven't yet had a chance to develop a good crown and a lot of roots, they may not survive. So if you need to seed this spring, get it done in the next few weeks. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Treat Broadleaf Weeds Now

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. The best time to treat broadleaf weeds in your lawn, the ones that cause us a lot of problems every spring, is actually in the fall. Henbit, dandelions, chickweed and speedwell are all starting to grow rapidly and will be blooming before you know it. Once that happens they become increasingly harder to kill. If you didn't treat broadleaf weeds in your lawn last fall - in late October or early November, get them treated soon. You can either use a liquid or granular product, both will work well. If using a liquid product, make sure that the sun is shining and it's going to be above 50 degrees for several hours after treatment. If you are using a granular product, read the label as some products say to apply when there is dew on the lawn. If you have a product that also has crabgrass control, go ahead and get it all applied soon. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Don't Be In A Hurry on Cleanup

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Gardeners can sometimes be busy little bees on nice days in late winter. If the weather is nice they feel that they have to be out cleaning and sprucing everything up. The problem is that tucked into all that old vegetation from last fall are a lot of eggs, cocoons, chrysalises and other overwintering insects that depend on that old vegetation. If you pull it all off now and burn it or toss it in the trash you may be destroying many insects that are beneficial in many ways. Additionally, many bird species will use fibers out of that old dead vegetation when they build their nests this spring. If you do feel obligated to clean areas off now, go ahead and just put all that debris in a little pile at the corner of the yard with a branch on it to hold it in place for a few weeks while everything wakes up. Give Mother Nature a hand! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Finish Peony and Iris Bed Cleanup

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I know that yesterday I said don't be in a hurry on landscape bed cleanup, but here's an exception that I will allow - and that is iris and peony beds. If you didn't get your peonies cleaned up last fall (and I'm holding my hand in the air here!) Then you need to do it now. Iris beds, you want to get all that old dead leaf material cleaned off soon. This all comes down to one thing - reducing disease risk. Both peonies and iris can get leaf spots later in growing season that comes from spores from last year's leaf material that was also infected. Carefully clip or pull all the old dead foliage up and get it away from the beds. Burning it is okay as is composting it but just get it away from the beds. Don't mow over the tops of this stuff as that shreds up the old leaves and scatters them everywhere making things worse! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Let the Gardening Season Begin!

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Many people feel that you have to plant potatoes on St. Patrick's Day. I'm not one of those people, I don't buy into that folk lore. However, soil and weather conditions allowing, I feel that March 15<sup>th</sup> marks the start of the gardening season. If the soil is dry enough I'll try to get some peas and lettuce planted in the next few days. Potatoes should probably wait another week, But the cole crops can go in the ground soon along with radishes, turnips and beets. Right after that, in the last week of March I can guarantee that I'll be getting my onions and leeks in the ground as well. All of those vegetable crops I just mentioned can be planted up to about the middle of April. In the latter half of April we start getting into a lot of other crops and then in May, look out. But for right now, we focus on the cold hardy crops only! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.