

Sweet Corn

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Tomatoes are the #1 favorite vegetable for home gardeners to grow. Likely right behind that as a favorite vegetable is sweet corn. I visit with many home gardeners who want to grow sweet corn and I spend a lot of time trying to talk them out of it. Sweet Corn does not work well in small gardens. Period. It all comes down to pollination. Pollen on sweet corn is shed from the tassels at the top of the plant to pollinate the silks about halfway down on the plant. One row of sweet corn, 10 or 20 feet long will not provide adequate pollination because most of the pollen is going to be blowing to the neighbors yard. My rule of thumb on sweet corn is you need a block at least 8 rows wide and 50 feet long. If you have a garden big enough to do this and you want some additional pointers, give me a call! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

May Lawn Fertilization

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. May is a critical time to fertilize your fescue or bluegrass lawn IF you have a high maintenance irrigated lawn. If you have a Charles Darwin lawn, you know, survival of the fittest, then you do NOT want to fertilize your lawn now. With an irrigated lawn your goal is to keep it green and growing all summer long. There's also about a 50/50 probability that you are bagging the clippings which eliminates the chance of the clippings returning those nutrients to the soil. Cool season grasses are growing rapidly right now as they send up seed stalks. Once that process has ended and you've mowed all of those seed heads off, the plant settles in to just standard vegetative growth the rest of the year. But that burst of early season growth uses up a lot of nutrients from the soil. Ideally your May fertilization is going to be primarily of a slow release nitrogen form that will slowly feed your lawn all summer long. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Blackspot of Roses

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Experienced rose growers know that we have moved into peak leaf disease season for roses, specifically the leaf disease known as blackspot. Aptly named the infection causes black spots on rose leaves. The leaves then turn yellow and fall off. While not fatal to the rose bush, you can wind up with a rose bush that has blossoms but no leaves. The lack of leaves will impact number and size of blossoms through the season. If you are planting new roses, select those that have blackspot disease resistance. Always plant roses in good full sun and strive to keep irrigation water off the leaves. Remove diseased leaves from the plant and from the ground as those will simply infect new leaves. Ultimately, if you have a bad disease problem, you will need to use one of several fungicides labeled for roses and treat every 10 to 14 days. Be sure to get the spray on both the upper and lower leaf surfaces. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Too Early for Bagworms

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I've already started to receive questions from homeowners on bagworms. While I appreciate the enthusiasm to deal with these evil creatures, it's still way too early to be treating. Bagworms overwinter as eggs in the little bags left behind on the trees they were feeding on last year. Spraying before they hatch does us no good. We know about how many growing degree days we need have before they start hatching and we aren't there yet! We also know that eggs that are on the south side of a tree will hatch sooner than those on the north side of the same tree because of differences in temperatures due to sun and shade. We are running ahead of normal on growing degree days but I'd still stick with not spraying the first treatment until about June 10th and the second one two weeks later. Use a hose end sprayer that allows you to apply enough carrier so it is dripping off the tree so you'll achieve good control. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

It's Time....

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Okay, gardeners, it's time. I always say that my preferred time for planting tender veggies like tomatoes and peppers is Mother's Day weekend or about the tenth of May. The ground has warmed up nicely now, the odds of a frost or even extremely cool weather becomes more and more remote by the day. You can plant your beans, okra, sweet corn, even lettuce now, as well as any of the vine crops with a couple of exceptions. It is too late to be planting those early season cold hardy crops. If you have left over seed for those root crops or leafy greens hang on to them though as we get a second chance to plant them with a fall garden. Even though we call it a fall garden we are planting it in July and early August. I'd suggest holding off on sweet potatoes for about another week - they really do like it hotter since they are a tropical vine, and also wait a while for pumpkins and winter squash. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.