

## Tomato Types

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Not all tomatoes are created equal. Many people think about tomatoes as slicers, or paste types or cherry or grape tomatoes, but it goes beyond that. There are also descriptors of growth habit. There are determinate, indeterminate and semi-determinate. With indeterminate tomatoes, the plants keep growing all season long and keep bearing all season long. These were the source of the name, tomato VINE. Determinate are the opposite. Determinate tomatoes grow to a certain size, stop growing and produce a big flush of fruit. These are the commercial varieties that they can harvest by machines. The semi-determinate are in between. Most of the common and popular tomato cultivars are going to be indeterminate or semi-determinate so you'll keep getting tomatoes all season long, or until the first frost! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Raise the Ceiling or Lower the Floor

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Many homeowners have had that one houseplant that just keeps growing and at some point you have to decide if you're going to raise the ceiling or lower the floor. Fortunately there is a third option and that is to bring your plant down to size. For something like a dieffenbachia you can cut off the stalk a foot or so above the soil level and it will simply re-sprout. For many other plants though you may have to use a process called air layering. In a nutshell, with air layering you make a split in the stem, hold it open with a small stick, apply a rooting hormone and then wrap it with a baseball sized wad of moist sphagnum peat moss and then wrap that with plastic wrap and tape it up to hold the wrap in place. In a month or two there should be new roots so you can repot the new start! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Poisonous Plants

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Many homeowners, with children and or pets, will often ask about their houseplants and if they are poisonous. Many plants have gotten placed on the "poison plant" list because one person thought that someone else had gotten sick from eating part of the plant. In many cases the plant parts are poisonous. The real challenge is that usually, no one wants to volunteer to eat a plant to see if they'll make you sick. Go figure! There is a rather lengthy list of common house plants as well as landscape plants that should be of concern. The list is far too lengthy to read here but if you have children at the age of everything going in the mouth, OR a pet that is a plant eater, you may want to get the list from me so you know what to look out for. And just a note here, some of the things on the list may surprise you! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Coldframes

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. For decades gardeners have used all sorts of devices and techniques to get a jump on the season. And before the day of high intensity lights which allowed us to start quality plants indoors there were coldframes. Coldframes are basically a miniature solar heated greenhouse. Gardeners would set these up on the south side of their house where they'd get a little heat from the house as well as the bright sun. They are normally 12 to 18 inches tall with a lid that has windows on and on hinges so on warm days it can be opened so it doesn't get too hot and then closed at night to hold the heat in. Cold frames are also used to start hardening off plants that you started inside before you set them out in the garden. For more information on coldframes or even hotbeds, contact me at the Extension Office. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Get Ready to Plant Asparagus and Rhubarb

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Asparagus and rhubarb, besides being some of the earliest crops we harvest, are both planted fairly early in the year. They are long lived perennials and are best planted in the early spring - mid March to mid April. Asparagus is planted on a mound in a trench and the trench is slowly filled in with soil during the first growing season. Space the crowns 18 to 24 inches apart in the trench. With rhubarb, plant them in a shallow trench so the bud is about ½ to 1 inch below the soil surface. Plants should be about 3 feet apart in the row. Both of these crops would greatly benefit with the addition of some well rotted or composted manure worked into the soil prior to planting. Both crops will take a couple of years of growth to be well enough established for harvesting. Plan to control weeds the first few years also. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.