

Gardening with Chuck Programs for January 31 - February 6, 2022

Use the Microclimates

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. As you move around your yard, the growing conditions aren't perfectly uniform as you move to the different locations. Some areas are windier, sunnier and hotter. Other areas have more shade, less sun and are slightly cooler. Soils can even be different, especially if a lot of fill soil was brought in when your house was built. All of these different areas are called microclimates and the gardener can use them to their full advantage. In those shady areas you can plant holly or boxwood, impatiens and begonias or maybe some hostas. In those full sun locations, plant petunias, marigolds and junipers. If you aren't familiar with your microclimates, start planting different things in different locations and see what thrives and what dies and be sure to keep notes. Microclimates are fun to play with and give you options! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Get Your Conservation Trees Ordered

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I routinely talk about ordering conservation trees from the Kansas Forest Service. If you live in rural areas and need windbreak trees these seedlings are a good way to get started without breaking the bank. But of greater interest to many of us are the pollinator bundles and wildlife bundles. These have a nice mix of trees and shrubs and the eastern pollinator bundle, with 25 plants, can even work well in a medium to larger lot in town. These trees also work well to plant a wood lot or a firewood lot. The forest service has a great collection of shrubs, bare root evergreen trees, containerized evergreen trees and bare root deciduous trees including 11 different species of oaks. The seedlings are shipped to your house and you can get order forms in our office or go online at kansasforests.org. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Grass is a Keen Competitor

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Think about your yard. You probably have trees, shrubs, maybe some flower or other landscape beds, and around all of this is grass. If you start to dig in your lawn, to plant a tree or something, what do you immediately encounter when you pull up that first shovel full. Yeah, roots - lots and lots of roots. No matter what kind of grass you have, any water or fertilizer that falls on the lawn, the grass get's first shot at it. If it is limited, any roots below the grass are likely not to get any. In studies where grass is allowed to grow right up to the trunk of trees and they compared this to trees grown with bare soil or organic mulch they found that trees that didn't have grass growing right up to the trunk had trunks that grew twice as much and had twice the leaf area and leaf mass. Keep the grass away from trees! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Seed Saving

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Sixty, seventy, eighty years ago many gardeners kept back seed from their garden plants for the next season. It's just how it was done. Many people still like to do that but it isn't without it's hazards. Those hazards are that what grows from the seed you selected may not be like what you originally grew. Many modern day garden varieties are hybrids or sometimes labeled F1. When you save seed from a hybrid and grow it out, you're going to get a hodge podge of plants that do not look like or yield like the original plant did. Heirloom varieties are open pollinated or what plant breeders call pure lines. So unless they get cross pollinated, you'll get offspring that are true to the parents. There are many other considerations if you want to save back your seed. I'd encourage you to visit with me first, before starting! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Evaluate the Landscape Now

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Some trees are already starting to show swelling buds. And while it's only early February, it won't be long until leaves are coming out of the trees. NOW is the time to take a nice weekend afternoon, grab a notebook and pencil and start walking around your yard. Take a look at the landscaping and take notes. Look for volunteer trees growing up in shrubs or landscape beds. Still time to get those cut out and stumps treated. After December's windstorm it's also a good time to look for hangers - those are branches that are broken out but don't fall to the ground. If you have some bigger ones, that would cause injury, hire professionals to come in and remove them. Then also look at trees for dead limbs or troublesome limbs over buildings and plan to hire a certified arborist to come in and get those properly pruned! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.