

Dividing Iris

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Bearded iris are a tough perennial flowering plant well suited to Kansas. But they periodically need to be dug up, divided and replanted to avoid overcrowding or just to expand a flower bed. Right now is a great time to do that up through about the middle of August. Dig up your iris and then start to cut them apart with a sharp knife. Ideally you want a Y shaped rhizome with two fans of foliage on small rhizomes attached to a larger rhizome. Discard any rhizomes that appear to have soft rot or just look funky. Replant into a weed free seed bed that has been worked up and fertilized as per a soil test. Iris don't need or like to be buried too deep. Cut the leaves back by two-thirds and plant them with the top of the rhizome just below the soil surface. Water them down good perhaps after applying a weed preventer. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Dutch Elm Disease

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We still have a lot of American and red elms and I see some with yellowing leaves. These are the classic symptoms of Dutch Elm Disease. Dutch Elm Disease is still around and is generally carried from tree to tree by the elm bark beetle. The disease is a fungus that grows inside and eventually kills the vessels that move water and nutrients throughout the tree. Trying to control the pest by spraying for the insect is ineffective. There are systemic fungicide treatments that can be done to protect trees, but they have to be done every three years or so. If you still have American or red elms on your property and they start to show symptoms of the disease the best thing to do is cut them down and burn them up as soon as possible. There are some good resistant American Elms that you can replant with however! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Peony Measles

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. It's not uncommon by late July for peonies to be looking bad as they often have measles. Some of them may also have powdery mildew. The reddish brown spots on the leaves are the measles and the plants were infected back in May. All you can do now is to carefully cut the plants off in late August or September and move all the foliage to a burn pile or trash. The disease overwinters on old leaf material so getting that stuff out of the peony bed early this year will reduce severity next year. Powdery mildew can be treated but most peonies have all the nutrients stored up in their roots now so you aren't really doing much good by spraying. By mid August the peony plants will have shut down so you can cut the foliage off at that time with no harm to next year's blooms. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Last Warm Season Grass Fertilization

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. It's hard to believe that in about a month the warm season grasses are going to be really slowing down in their growth as they head into fall and then winter dormancy. Two months from now they will be done for the year. If you have buffalograss you don't need to do anything as we fertilize that once in late May. But if you have Bermuda grass or zoysia giving it one more fertilization while it is still growing well helps it get through to the end of the summer with good growth which helps it thicken up the stand and store up nutrients for next year's growth. As usual, aim for one pound of actual nitrogen per 1,000 square feet. If it doesn't rain within about 72 hours it would help to get it watered in with irrigation. If you have a lot of broadleaf weeds at this time you could use a weed and feed or just fertilizer. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

Sudden Vine Collapse (squash and cucumbers)

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Both cucumbers and squash can be growing along just fine and then in a matter of days, vines will just up and wither up to nothing and die. With cucumbers this is usually caused by bacterial wilt, a disease carried by cucumber beetles. There's no cure for the disease, you just have to try to keep cucumber beetles at bay by routine weekly spraying through the end of the season. Squash vines wilting and collapsing are likely due to squash vine borer. By now there isn't much that can be done other than to slit the base of the dying vine open and look for the culprit, destroying it if you find it. Then make a note that next year, start treating the base of the plant with garden insecticide starting in mid June and continuing through late July. Eggs are laid under the stems so you want to get the rascals right after they hatch. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.