

## Gardening with Chuck Programs for March 7 - 13, 2022

### Don't Be In A Hurry with Warm Season Lawns

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Over the next two months you'll hear a lot of us so called experts talking a lot about lawn care. IF you are one of the 10 or 15% that have a warm season grass lawn such as buffalograss, or Bermuda or Zoysia grass, then just ignore us. Cool season grasses are starting to grow right now which is about on time. Warm season grasses are called that because they don't grow until it starts to warm up - about May 1<sup>st</sup>. Yes, you can probably apply some weed control now, but fertilizing those lawns now will only encourage the plants to grow that you really don't want. With warm season lawns we apply our first fertilization in mid to late May. With buffalo grass that's about all you fertilize it. Bermuda and zoysia can handle more fertilizer. So it's okay to apply crabgrass preventer now, and then get ready for some basketball. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## How Soon To Apply Crabgrass Preventers

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. People are getting antsy to get crabgrass preventer applied. The thing to remember about the weedy grasses we are trying to control with these preventers is that they aren't going to start germinating for another 5 or 6 weeks. The sooner you apply these products, the sooner they can run out. For older preventer products like pendimethalin or certainly surflan, wait until the redbuds are starting to bloom and then retreat as the label directs you to. However, if you are using one of the newer products like dithiopyr (also known as Dimension) or prodiamine (Barricade), you can apply those just about anytime now, but remember that they need to be rained or watered in before they will become active. How much rain or water? I'd like to see a half inch of rainfall or irrigation after the product is applied. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Ash Flower Gall

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Most of the ash trees being sold today are male clones which means they don't have seeds. As an aside, please don't plant anymore ash trees as an insect pest is heading this way that will kill most of them eventually. Anyway, these ash trees are males and early in the spring they bloom. Normally, once the flowers are through releasing their pollen the flowers dry up and fall off. But sometimes, as they are blooming, they become infested with a tiny insect called the ash flower gall midge. The feeding of this midge causes the plant to react and form new tissue around the insects creating a fringy looking mass that is green but eventually turns brown in the fall. These masses may stay on all winter and into the next growing season. While unsightly, they do not damage the tree and there really is no treatment for them. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Wildflowers

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Many people want to start a flower bed of wildflowers. Unfortunately, this process is a bit different from planting annual flowers and you will need some patience. You really need to start the late summer before planting by laying out the area and killing all the vegetation, then tilling it in the fall. You need an area that gets at least 8 hours of sunshine during summer days. Most people will start with a seed mix so spread the seed out from early April to mid May, rake it in and then keep the bed watered. Since many of these flowers are perennials, it will likely take a couple of years to get those plants well established. Stay aggressive at pulling out weeds and grasses. The first year it just may look like a weed patch but keep weeding it and keep it watered. Eventually it will start to bloom! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Get Ready to Plant Grass

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. We may be just a week or two early, BUT, if you want to be planting grass, get ready so you can roll when it's time. Depending on the year you may be able to start planting in very late March, but I normally like to wait until about the third week of April. With that said, late summer is a much better time to plant grass. If you have bare soil right now then yes, you probably need to do a spring sowing. But if you really just want to thicken up the lawn or fill in some thin patches, just wait until late summer for more reasons than I have time to cover today. If you do plant this spring, then a few things to remember. Do not apply any weed control or weed preventer product this spring. Be sure to apply some starter fertilizer preplant. Then, because getting it up and going is important, be ready to water it, a lot! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

