

Horticulture 2017 Newsletter

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Video of the Week: [Planting a Garden](#)

VEGETABLES

Blanching Cauliflower



Gardeners that haven't grown cauliflower before are often surprised that the heads of most varieties are a yellowish color and not the white they expect. The yellowish hue is a reaction to sunlight. In order to have the heads remain white, the developing heads must be covered to protect them from the sun. This is commonly done by pulling several of the outer leaves over the head when the head is the size of a silver dollar. Hold the leaves in place by a clothespin, rubber band, tape or soft twine. Plants need to be checked every few days to make sure the curds of the expanding head don't begin to show. There are some

varieties that are self-blanching but watch them to make sure the leaves actually do cover the head. Self-blanching varieties are more likely to "work" in cool weather. (Ward Upham)

Help for New Vegetable Gardeners



Kansans that are new to vegetable gardening often don't know how much of each crop to plant. K-State Research and Extension has a publication that can help. The "Vegetable Garden Planting Guide" gives information on the size of planting needed per person and the average crop expected per 100 feet. Also included is a garden calendar highlighting suggested planting dates and expected harvest dates. Crop specific information is detailed including days to germinate, plants or seeds

needed per 100 feet of row, depth of planting, spacing within the row and spacing between rows. You can find the publication at your local county extension office or online at:

<http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/bookstore/pubs/mf315.pdf> .

Another, more in-depth publication titled the "Kansas Garden Guide" is also available. This 77-page booklet has sections on planning a garden, composting, improving soil, seeding and planting, garden care, watering, planting gardens for fall production, insect and disease control, container gardening, season extension and harvesting and storing. This is followed by an

extensive section on how to grow specific vegetables and herbs. You may order the print publication at <http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/bookstore/Item.aspx?catId=534&pubId=8219>. This web page also provides a link to a free PDF copy of the same publication. If you don't know the location of your county extension office, see <http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/Map.aspx> (Ward Upham)

FRUIT

Fertilizing Grapes



Year of Planting: Apply one-half cup of a 10-10-10 fertilizer per vine as growth begins in the spring. Repeat after one month. Fertilizers should be spread evenly from the trunk out 3 to 5 feet.

Second Year: Apply 1 cup of a 10-10-10 fertilizer per vine as growth begins in the spring. Fertilizers should be spread evenly from the trunk out 3 to 5 feet.

Mature Vines (3 years and older): If the soil test recommends phosphorus and potassium, use a 10-10-10 fertilizer at the rate of 2 cups per mature vine. Fertilizers should be spread evenly from the trunk out 3 to 5 feet.

If, however, there are adequate levels of phosphorus and potassium, add 3/4 cup of a high nitrogen fertilizer such as a 27-3-3, 29-5-4, 30-3-3 or something similar instead of the 10-10-10. Though recommended for lawns, these fertilizers will also work well as long as they do not contain weed killers or crabgrass preventers. Fertilizers should be spread evenly from the trunk out 3 to 5 feet. (Ward Upham)

Fertilizing the Home Orchard



Fruit trees benefit from fertilization around the bloom period, but the amount needed varies with the age of the tree. Normally, trees primarily need nitrogen, so the recommendations are for a high nitrogen fertilizer such as a 27-3-3, 29-5-4, 30-3-3 or something similar. Though recommended for lawns, these fertilizers will also work well as long as they do not contain weed killers or crabgrass preventers. Use the following rates:

- Trees 1 to 2 years old, apply one-fourth cup of fertilizer per tree;
- Trees 3 to 4 years old, apply one-half cup per tree;
- Trees 5 to 10 years old, apply 1 to 2 cups per tree;
- Trees more than 10 years old, apply 2 to 3 cups.

You may also use nitrate of soda (16-0-0) but double the rate recommended above. If a soil test calls for phosphorus and potassium, use a 10-10-10 but triple the rate.

On apple trees, last year's growth should be 8 to 10 inches, cherries should have 10 to 12 inches, and peaches should equal 12 to 15 inches of terminal growth. If less than this, apply the higher rate of fertilizer, and if more, apply the lesser amount.

Spread all fertilizer evenly on the ground away from the trunk of the tree and to the outer spread of the branches. Water in the fertilizer. (Ward Upham)

ORNAMENTALS

Cedar Apple Rust



The birds are singing, the tulips are blooming, and junipers (also called red cedars) are “blooming” in another fashion. Cedar apple rust is here. The pathogen (a fungus) spends part of its life cycle on a juniper tree, and the other part of its life cycle on apples, crabapples, hawthorns, or quince. To simplify, we’ll just call them “apple hosts.”

Those jelly-like orange masses on the junipers produce spores that infect the apple hosts. Once infection occurs, leaf spots on apple leaves develop in 1-3 weeks. Eventually, fungal spores are produced in these leaf spots on the apple tissues. The spores are spread by wind and rain back to junipers starting in about July. Without both hosts, the fungus can’t complete its life cycle.

The disease looks dramatic on junipers, but it does not cause any harm. The rusts can cause problems in the apple host, however. If infection is severe, many leaves drop off early and the tree is weakened due to reduced photosynthesis. If your tree only gets a small amount of rust each year, it probably won’t be an issue for long term tree health.

Management options (for apple hosts):

- 1) Resistance: For new plantings of fruiting or flowering apples, consider planting a rust-resistant variety. Information on crabapple cultivars is available at: <http://www.midway.k-state.edu/lawn-garden/docs/flowering%20crabapples.pdf>
- 2) Tree care: For any apple tree, proper pruning will allow air movement through the canopy. This practice reduces the leaf wetness that promotes disease. Maintaining overall tree health will also help prevent the disease.
- 3) Fungicides: Homeowners with a bad history of this disease (severe defoliation), might consider preventative fungicide sprays on the apple hosts when leaves are out and the orange

galls are active. For best control, applications should continue through May or as long as the orange galls are active.

Products with the active ingredients myclobutanil or propiconazole are examples of materials labeled for cedar apple rust management in flowering crabapples and non-fruiting apples. Propiconazole products include Bonide Infuse Concentrate and Fertilome Liquid Systemic Fungicide.

Some myclobutanil products are labeled for fruiting apples. However, in all cases, make sure you check the label carefully. For example, the myclobutanil product “Immunox Plus” is labeled for rust on flowering crabapples, but not for fruiting/eating apples, as it contains an insecticide along with the myclobutanil ingredient. In contrast, “Immunox Multi-Purpose Fungicide” is labeled for fruiting apples. If your local store does not carry products for fruit trees, you can find internet sites which carry different products.

Commercial fruit growers should consult the 2017 Midwest Tree Fruit Spray Guide, available here: <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1282.pdf>

More information on cedar apple rusts is available at this site: <http://www.plantpath.k-state.edu/doc/extension-factsheets/apple-rust.pdf> There is also a video on rust diseases at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yQdwSPtvH8> (Megan Kennelly)

TURFGRASS

Henbit and Chickweed in Lawns



The plant with the little purple flowers that have been showing up in home lawns is called henbit. If you are not sure this is what you have, check the stems. If they are square rather than round, you have henbit. A plant that also is low growing but has round stems and tiny white flowers is chickweed.

Both these plants are winter annuals and start to grow in the fall. They spend the winter as small plants and so most people do not pay much attention to them until they start to flower in the spring. Trying to kill either one at this late stage with a herbicide usually is a waste of time and money. Though plants may be burned back, they will rarely be killed. So what should you do? Remember, these are winter annuals that will die as soon as the weather turns hot. Keep the lawn mowed until nature takes its course.

However, you can do something next fall that will help next spring. Henbit and chickweed usually germinate about mid-October. Spraying with 2,4-D, Weed-B-Gon, Weed Free Zone, Weed Out, or Trimec in late October to early November can go a long way toward eliminating

these plants as they are small and relatively easy to control. Choose a day that is at least 50 degrees F so the young plants are actively growing and will take up the chemical.

Spot treating will probably be needed in the spring (March) to catch the few plants that germinate late. Use Weed Free Zone, Speed Zone, Weed Out, Weed-B-Gon, Trimec, or one of the special henbit herbicides early in the spring before they have put on much growth. (Ward Upham)

Seeding Cool-Season Lawns in the Spring

There are several reasons Kentucky bluegrass and tall fescue lawns are better seeded in the fall than in the spring. These include:



- Some of the most serious lawn weeds such as crabgrass and foxtail emerge in the spring. Since they are warm-season weeds, they will compete and often crowd out young, tender cool-season grasses during the heat of summer.
- The most stressful time of year for cool-season grasses is summer, not winter. Poorly established lawns may die out during the summer due to heat and drought stress.
- A lawn often gets more use during the summer, leading to increased compaction and traffic stress.

If an area needs to be established in the spring, sodding is much more likely to be successful than seeding. Sodding provides stronger, more mature plants that are better able to withstand stress and prevent weed invasion. (Ward Upham)

MISCELLANEOUS

Setting Up Water Teepees



If you use water teepees to get your tomatoes off to an early start, you have probably struggled with their tendency to fall over as you try to fill them. An old trick is to use a 5-gallon plastic bucket to make the process easier.

The bucket works much better if it is modified by removing the handle and drilling a hole (use a hole saw bit) in the bottom of the bucket. Place the bucket upside down over the plant you wish to protect and place the water teepee over the bucket.

Now the bucket will support the teepee as it is filled. Once the teepee is filled, the bucket can be removed by sticking your finger into the hole and pulling straight up. You may also want to support the teepee after it is filled by using a metal rod (rebar or an electric fence post) on the inside of the teepee. The metal rod is pushed into the soil to keep the teepee from collapsing from high winds. (Ward Upham)

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To view Upcoming Events: <http://hnr.k-state.edu/events/index.html>

The web version includes color images that illustrate subjects discussed. To subscribe to this newsletter electronically, send an e-mail message to cdipman@ksu.edu or wupham@ksu.edu listing your e-mail address in the message.

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