

# Horticulture 2017 Newsletter

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**Video of the Week:** Cuttings to Grow Inside for the Winter  
[Cuttings to Grow Inside for the Winter](#)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **Kansas Turf Conference in conjunction with KNLA**

**December 5, 6 & 7, 2017**

Kansas Expocentre, Topeka



Mark the date to attend the Kansas Turfgrass Conference in conjunction with KNLA on December 5, 6 & 7 in Topeka.

The conference is an excellent way to learn about turf, nursery and landscape management, visit with old friends, network with new ones, and see all the latest equipment and supplies from local and national vendors.

The conference has been approved for Commercial pesticide recertification hours:

1 Core hour    3A - 8.5 hrs    3B - 10 hrs

International Society of Arboriculture CEUs and GCSAA education points will also be available by attending the conference.

Download a copy of the program, get exhibitor information, or register online

<http://www.kansasturfgrassfoundation.com/annual-ktf-conference.html>

## TURFGRASS

### **Lawn Seeding Deadline Nears**

September is the best month to reseed cool-season lawns such as tall fescue and Kentucky bluegrass. However, you can get by with an early to mid-October planting for tall fescue. October 15 is generally considered the last day for safely planting or overseeding a tall fescue lawn in the fall. If you do attempt a late seeding, take special care not



to allow plants to dry out. Anything that slows growth will make it less likely that plants will mature enough to survive the winter.

Seedlings done after the cut-off date can be successful, but the success rate goes down the later the planting date. Late plantings that fail are usually not killed by cold temperatures but rather desiccation. The freezing and thawing of soils heave poorly rooted grass plants out of the ground, which then dry and die. Keeping plants watered will help maximize root growth before freezing weather arrives. (Ward Upham)

## ORNAMENTALS

### Tubakia Leaf Spot of Oak



This leaf spot disease of oak is showing up now. Members of the red oak group are more likely to be affected than those in the white oak group, but members of both groups are showing symptoms. Red oaks often have distinct round spots as well as dead areas that follow the veins.

White oaks also have the dead areas that follow the veins and large blotches of dead tissue but lack the distinct spots. Leaves severely damaged may drop. However, trees rarely lose enough leaves to harm the health of the tree. No fungicide sprays are recommended. (Ward Upham)



### Twig Dieback on Oak



Recently we have seen twig dieback on pin and other oaks caused by a fungal disease called Botryosphaeria canker. Affected trees show wilting or “flagging” of terminal growth on the ends of branches. Dieback usually extends 4 to 6 inches down the twig with leaves bending back toward the twig before turning brown. Dead leaves remain attached to the tree. If you look closely at the twig, you should see a rather marked transition from healthy to diseased tissue. Take a knife and scrape away some of the outer bark tissue. Healthy tissue is light green. Diseased

tissue tends to be brown to black.

Botryosphaeria canker affects only the tips of branches. This disease causes such minor damage that chemical control measures are unwarranted. Dead twigs on small trees may be pruned off if desired. (Ward Upham)

## Water Landscape Plants if Needed



Even with most areas of Kansas receiving adequate rainfall through most of the year, certain areas have been dry recently. Watering now is important if soils are dry to help alleviate moisture stress.

A good, deep watering with moisture reaching at least a foot down into the soil is much better than several light sprinklings that just wet the top portions of the soil. A deep watering will help ensure that the majority of roots have access to water. Regardless of the watering method used, soil should be wet at least 12 inches deep. Use a metal rod, wooden dowel, electric fence post or something similar to check depth. Dry soil is much harder to push through than wet.

Although all perennial plants benefit from moist soils before winter, it is especially important for newly planted trees and shrubs due to limited root systems. Even trees and shrubs planted within the last 2 to 3 years are more sensitive to drought than a well-established plant. Evergreens are also more at risk because moisture is lost from the foliage.

Trees or shrubs planted within the last year can be watered inexpensively with a 5-gallon bucket. Drill a small hole (1/8") in the side of the bucket near the bottom. Fill the bucket and let the water dribble out slowly next to the tree. Refill the bucket once more, and you have applied 10 gallons. Very large transplanted trees and trees that were transplanted two to three years ago will require more water.

A perforated soaker hose is a good way to water a newly established bed or foundation plantings. However, soaker hoses are notorious for non-uniform watering. In other words, you often receive too much water from one part of the hose and not enough from another. Hooking both the beginning and the end of the soaker hose to a Y-adapter helps equalize the pressure and therefore provide a more uniform watering. The specific parts you need are shown in the photo above and include the soaker hose, Y-adapter and female to female connector. It is also helpful if the Y-adapter has shut off valves so the volume of flow can be controlled. Too high a flow rate can allow water to run off rather than soak in.

On larger trees, the soaker hose can circle the trunk at a distance within the dripline of the tree but at least 1/2 the distance to the dripline. The dripline of the tree is outermost reach of the branches. On smaller trees, you may circle the tree several times so that only soil which has tree roots will be watered.

If using a soaker hose, note the time watering was started. Check frequently to determine the amount of time it takes for water to reach 12 inches. From then on, you can water "by the clock." Use a kitchen oven timer so you remember to move the hose or shut off the faucet. If you are seeing surface runoff, reduce the flow, or build a berm with at least a 4-foot diameter around the base of the tree to allow the water to percolate down through the soil, instead of spreading out. (Ward Upham)

## Ornamental Sweet Potatoes



We often receive the question as to whether ornamental sweet potatoes are safe to eat. The answer is yes. Note that they are chosen for ornamental qualities rather than flavor and so may not have the quality of our traditional types. See the accompanying article on how to cure them. (Ward Upham)

## VEGETABLES

### Harvesting Sweet Potatoes



Sweet potatoes should be harvested no later than the first fall freeze because cold temperatures can damage the sensitive roots. However, you may want to harvest earlier if you prefer a smaller sweet potato. Test dig a hill to see if they are the size you want.

Sweet potatoes should be cured after being dug. The digging process often damages the tender skin, and curing helps these small wounds heal. Place the roots in a warm, humid location for 5 to 10 days immediately after digging. A location with a temperature around 85 to 90 degrees is ideal. A space heater can be used to heat a small room or other area. Raise the humidity by placing moist towels in the room. The curing process not only heals wounds but also helps convert starches to sugars. This process improves the texture and flavor of the roots.

Sweet potatoes should be stored above 55 degrees. Storage at temperatures below that injures the roots, shortens storage life and gives them an off flavor. (Ward Upham)

## PESTS

### Garden Spiders



People may become concerned when they see a large, noticeable spider setting up shop in or near the garden. These garden spiders feed on insects and are considered beneficial.

There are actually two common species of garden spiders in Kansas that are active during the day. The yellow garden spider has a black abdomen with yellow to

yellow-orange markings. The black legs have a yellow or reddish band.



The banded garden spider has numerous bands on both the abdomen and legs. Those on the abdomen are alternating white and dark bands. The legs have alternating black and orange bands. Both of these spiders are orb weavers that spin large webs with the typical spider web shape.

Though these garden spiders have poor eyesight, they are extremely sensitive to vibrations that pass through the web and use this sensitivity to capture their prey. Since these spiders are beneficial and harmless to humans, it is recommended that they be left alone. (Ward Upham)

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

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