

Horticulture 2023 Newsletter

No. 39 October 3, 2023

1712 Claflin, 2021 Throckmorton Plant Science Cntr.
Manhattan, KS 66506 (785) 532-6173

Video of the Week: [Storing and Preserving Peppers](#)

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Putting Your Garden to Bed: Winter Garden Prep

Wednesday, October 4th 12:00PM -1:00PM CST

The growing season is nearly over, but your garden work may not quite be done just yet. Join Anthony Reardon, West Plains District Horticulture Extension Agent, as you learn about all of the various gardening tasks that can help your landscape through the winter and prepare your garden for the growing season to come.



Register Here!



Please register for this free Zoom Webinar at:
ksre-learn.com/KStateGardenHour



<https://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/consumer-horticulture/garden-hour/>

EVENTS

[Kansas Forest Service Tree, Shrub Seedling Sale](#), September 1 - October 15

[Kansas Turf & Landscape Conference](#)

The 73rd Annual Kansas Turf & Landscape Conference will be held on Wednesday, November 29 and Thursday, November 30 at the Hilton Garden Inn, Manhattan. The conference is an excellent way to learn about turf and landscape management, visit with old friends, network with new ones, and see all the latest products and supplies from local and national vendors.

The conference has been approved for commercial pesticide recertification hours:

1 Core hour

3A - 7 hours

3B - 7hours

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

For more information, go to <https://www.kansasturfgrassfoundation.com/>

REMINDERS

- Add organic matter to vegetable garden this fall.
- Bring houseplants in if you haven't already.
- Dig sweet potatoes

VEGETABLES

Fall Planting: Asparagus & Rhubarb



Asparagus and rhubarb are traditionally transplanted in mid-March through mid-April. However, they can be moved successfully in the fall if you wait until the tops have turned brown.

After the frost hits and the asparagus and rhubarb tops turn brown, cut them back to the ground and prepare the soil as you would for spring planting. Water well and add mulch to the rhubarb so the roots do not heave out of the soil during winter. Since asparagus is planted deeper it

does not require mulch. (Cynthia Domenghini)

Here are K-State resources for more detail on

asparagus: <http://www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/mf319.pdf>

and rhubarb: <http://www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/ep99.pdf>

Last Tomatoes of the Season



With October upon us and cooler evening temperatures, the tomato harvest is slowing down. Remaining tomatoes can be left on the vine to ripen to give them the best flavor. However, harvest all tomatoes in advance of an impending frost.

Green tomatoes that are full-sized and have a white, star-shaped section on the bottom of the fruit have reached the "mature green stage". They can be harvested and placed in a paper bag to continue ripening.

Tomatoes with blemishes or cracks in the skin should be discarded to avoid contaminating others. Store ripe tomatoes on cardboard trays with newspaper between layers if stacked. If possible, keep the temperature close to 55 degrees F. Check periodically for rotting and remove tomatoes as needed. (Cynthia Domenghini)

Peppers from the Garden



Peppers from the garden can last for several weeks stored in the fridge especially if they are kept moist. They can also be frozen for longer term storage. Cut the peppers into slices or chunks and place in a single layer on a baking sheet. Freeze for one hour. This is called “flash freezing”. The pepper pieces can now be stored in a freezer bag and won’t stick together in a clump. Although frozen peppers may be soft or even mushy when defrosted, they maintain their flavor and work great for cooking. (Cynthia Domenghini)

TURFGRASS

Should You Let Turf Grow Tall in the Fall?



Some people believe taller grass in the winter provides insulation for the plant crowns protecting them through freezing temperatures. If this practice provides any benefit it loses value due to the negative issues that can arise as the tall blades fall over creating a matted environment perfect for winter diseases.

The best practice for preparing turf for winter is provide adequate care and ensure your plants are healthy. This requires action year-round including fertilizing, watering and mowing. Follow recommendations for the variety of turf you are growing, but overall, maintaining the proper height throughout the year is best.

Here is a list of the recommended mowing height ranges (in inches) for home lawns in Kansas:

Tall fescue: 2.5 -3.5

Kentucky bluegrass: 2-3

Buffalograss: 2-3

Bermudagrass: 1-2

Zoysiagrass: 1-2

(Note: Mowing at heights below 1.5 inches requires a reel mower).

It may be beneficial to adjust mowing height within these recommendations at specific times. For example, warm-season grasses may be mowed taller during late summer and early fall so they can store more carbohydrates for the winter. It may also help to reduce the occurrence of cool-weather diseases. However, this height is still within the recommendation. (Cynthia Domenghini)

MISCELLANEOUS

Amending Soils with Sand

Although sand is sometimes suggested as an amendment for clay soil, problems can arise if the proportions of sand to clay are not correct. Clay soil has small pore spaces while sand has large pore spaces. When mixed together, the clay soil particles fill in the pore spaces of the sand. The resulting soil is denser with less pore space than before, resembling concrete.



To effectively amend clay soil with sand, at least 80% of the mix would have to be sand which is impractical and cost prohibitive. Alternatively, organic matter can be incorporated to clay soil for much better results. (Cynthia Domenghini)

Work Garden Soil in the Fall



Fall is a great time to prepare the soil for spring gardening. With drier fall weather, the soil is less likely to clump when it is tilled. Any clumps that do form will break down over the winter as the soil freezes and thaws leaving behind soil that's ready to plant in the spring.

Working the soil in the fall also breaks down debris contributing organic matter back into the garden. Debris provides a habitat for diseases and insects. Tilling it into the soil disrupts the habitat and prevents pests from overwintering and wreaking havoc on next year's crops.

When adding organic matter into the soil follow the general rule of incorporating two-inches of organic matter to the surface and till it in. Leaves and garden waste can be mowed first to cut it into smaller pieces that will break down more quickly. Well-tilled soil should have pellet-sized particles. Use caution not to over till the soil and turn it into dust. (Cynthia Domenghini)

Spring-flowering Plants Blooming in the Fall



If your spring-blooming ornamentals are flowering this time of year it is likely the result of the hot, dry weather causing stress on the plants. Some ornamentals are categorized as "re-bloomers" such as irises. These plants are intended to have a second bloom during the growing season. Regardless of the reason for fall flowering, the number of blooms is likely sparse and not going to affect the spring bloom. (Cynthia Domenghini)

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