

Horticulture 2023 Newsletter

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

Video of the Week: [Basic Care of Houseplants](#)

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Beekeeping Basics: How to Start Your Own Colony

Wednesday, December 6th 12:00PM -1:00PM CST

Beekeeping is both popular and important for many reasons. Whether it's to produce your own local honey, supplement pollination of nearby plants, promote conservation, or even personal entertainment, there are many reasons to become a beekeeper. Join Ryan Engel, Golden Prairie District Horticulture Extension Agent, as he covers the equipment you will need, how to source your bees, and what it takes to establish a new colony.



Register Here!



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



REMINDERS

- Cover strawberry plants with mulch so they don't heave out of the ground this winter.

VEGETABLES

Using Old Garden Seed



As we watch prices increase for many items, being able to save money is always exciting. If you're browsing seed catalogs as you plan for next year's garden, here are some guidelines to help you know the shelf-life of certain vegetable seeds.

The length of time a seed remains viable depends on the variety as well as storage conditions. The included chart gives average storage time for common garden vegetables *if* they are maintained in proper conditions.

Seeds should be stored in a cool, dry location away from direct sunlight. For short-term storage, freezing is not necessary, but a refrigerator could be used if a cool room, such as a basement, is not available. Seeds must be adequately dried prior to storing or they may sprout prematurely or rot. Storing the seeds in a spot where the temperature and humidity are consistent is preferred. If the seeds will be stored in an area that remains cool and dry, they can be saved in a paper bag or envelope. However, glass or metal containers will protect seeds from predators including rodents and insects.

To determine if seeds are still viable, place ten on a moist paper towel. Cover the seeds with a second moist paper towel. Roll the towels together and seal in a plastic bag that has several holes poked in it. Keep the bag in a warm location adding more water to the towels to maintain moisture. Check for germination after one week. Remove seeds that have sprouted and place the others back in the bag. Check again after another week. Determine the germination rate based on the percent of total seeds that sprouted. (Cynthia Domenghini)

Vegetable Crop	Average Seed Viability (years)
Arugula	6
Beans	2-4
Beets	2-5
Broccoli	3-5
Brussels Sprouts	3-5
Cabbage	3-5
Carrots	3-5
Cauliflower	4-5
Celery	3-5
Collards	4-6
Sweet Corn	1-3
Cucumber	3-6
Eggplant	4-6
Kale	3-5
Kohlrabi	3-5
Lettuce	4-6
Melon	3-6

Okra	2-3
Onions	1-2
Parsnip	1-3
Peas	2-4
Peppers	2-5
Pumpkins	4-6
Radish	4-5
Rutabaga	3-5
Soybean	3-5
Spinach	1-5
Squash	3-6
Swiss Chard	2-5
Tomato	3-7
Turnip	4-5

FRUIT

Mouse Damage to Fruit Trees/Plants



As food for wildlife becomes scarce, mice turn to a favorite alternative, fruit tree bark. Mice can travel unnoticed, especially when snow is on the ground, and chew through the outer layer of bark at the base of the trees. Heavy feeding reduces the trees' ability to transport food to the roots and can result in death.

Prevent damage from mice by keeping the ground clear of debris. This removes the protective layer mice are seeking to stay hidden from predators. Weeds, leaves and grass

should all be maintained. Even mulch can create a hideout for small rodents.

Wrap the base of the trunks with hardware cloth at least 18-inches high. Mice will not be able to access the bark through this material. Be sure to remove the wire during the active growing season to prevent damaging the trunk as it grows.

In some situations, a baited trap may be the best route to avoid losing fruit trees. Bait stations can easily be made to ensure only the intended pests are accessing the bait. Use extreme caution when handling the bait and follow proper procedures to keep pets, children and others safe.

Monitor fruit trees regularly for signs of damage to the trunk. Damage can be more than an aesthetic problem if not remedied quickly. (Cynthia Domenghini)

ORNAMENTALS

Controlling Volunteer Trees



With many things, free is good. When it comes to trees, free is great, unless the plants have negative qualities. “Volunteer” trees are those that establish themselves from seed. For certain trees this is a welcomed attribute as it requires little to no effort from the gardener. However, in the case of fast growing or invasive trees along with those that lack aesthetic value, volunteers are undesirable.

If the volunteer tree is one you would like to keep but perhaps in a different area, transplanting is an option if the tree is still small (less than two-inch diameter trunk). You will have the best success if you transplant during dormancy, specifically fall or early spring.

For volunteers that are not wanted, the trees will either need to be cut or dug out. Many trees will re-sprout after cutting so the stump will need to be treated with an herbicide.

Suckers differ from volunteers because they grow from the root of an existing tree. If herbicides are used on suckers it may cause damage or even death to the parent tree. Some trees that commonly produce suckers include: tree of heaven, honeylocust, black locust, hackberry, western soapberry, cottonwood, aspen, poplar, willow and boxelder.

Triclopyr and glyphosate are the herbicides most commonly available to homeowners. Triclopyr is found in many brush killers and glyphosate is found in Roundup as well as numerous other products. Read the label before purchasing to make sure that a cut stump treatment is listed. Most often the undiluted or lightly diluted product is applied to the stump immediately after cutting using a foam paint brush. Paint brushes with bristles are more likely to drip and cause herbicide damage to the surrounding plants.

Now is a good time to control volunteer trees. If using herbicides make note of the temperature requirements during application. Always follow label instructions for safe handling and application. (Cynthia Domenghini)

MISCELLANEOUS

Monitor Indoor Plants

How are your houseplants doing? Plants that thrived through spring and summer next to the front door or a window may be showing signs of stress due to exposure to the freezing temperatures we’ve experienced lately. This is a good time to take inventory on your indoor garden.



Plants exposed to excessive chilling may begin to show leaf spots or blemishes. Most houseplants prefer temperatures between 65- and 75-degrees F due to their tropical nature. Plants brought in to overwinter from outdoors may tolerate lower temperatures in moderation.

Remember to follow recommendations when watering. Overwatering houseplants is a common cause of death. Soil should be allowed to dry slightly between watering. Soil that begins to shrink away from the container is too dry.

Remove the plant from the container and soak it in water to allow it to retain moisture again.

If water drips out of the soil when you squeeze it, this is too wet. Experienced gardeners can sometimes determine when water is needed based on the weight of the plant. Familiarize yourself with these differences by lifting the container when the plant is dry and again after watering. When watering, add enough so water drains through the holes in the bottom of the container. Dump the water collected in the saucer.

Observe the plant stems and look for signs of elongation including excessively long petioles (stem attaching leaf to plant) and internodes (section of stem between leaves). Notice yellowing leaves and unexpected leaf drop. Each of these conditions are symptoms of inadequate light. If possible, move plants closer to a natural light source or use grow lights to provide supplemental lighting.

Regularly monitor houseplants for diseases and pests. Some symptoms of this include a sticky substance on the leaves; small brown/white/green spots (pests) on the leaves, yellowing leaves sometimes with tiny speckles and webbing on leaves. Also maintain healthy roots by ensuring the plants are not outgrowing their containers and the soil is draining well. (Cynthia Domenghini)

Contributors:

Cynthia Domenghini, Instructor and Horticulture Extension Specialist

Ward Upham, Extension Associate

Division of Horticulture
1712 Claflin, 2021 Throckmorton
Manhattan, KS 66506
(785) 532-6173

For questions or further information, contact: cdom@ksu.edu, wupham@ksu.edu OR cdipman@ksu.edu

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