

# Horticulture 2024 Newsletter

## No. 10 March 11, 2024

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### Video of the Week: K-State Garden Hour - Fruit Tree Selection

[https://youtu.be/KyX-KMfC41k?si=zUHi\\_uZkRKtwR58K](https://youtu.be/KyX-KMfC41k?si=zUHi_uZkRKtwR58K)

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Be on the Lookout** for changes to the Hort Newsletter. We will be testing a new look and are eager to share it with you soon. Don't worry; we will have the same great content, but hope to improve the reading experience while supporting those who share our content digitally.

## GARDEN CALENDAR

### Planting

<u>Crop</u>	<u>Type of Planting</u>	<u>Timing</u>
asparagus	crowns	mid-March to mid-April
kale	seed/transplant	mid-March
fennel	seed	mid-March to early-April
kohlrabi	seed	mid-March to early-April
lettuce	seed	mid-March to early-April
leeks	transplant	mid-March
onion	sets/plants	mid-to late-March
parsnips	seed	mid-March to early-April
peas	seed	mid-March
potatoes	seed	mid-March to early-April
radish	seed	mid- to late-March
rhubarb	crowns	March to April
rutabaga	seed	mid- to late-March
spinach	seed	mid- to late-March
turnip	seed	mid- to late-March
fruit trees		mid-March

### Pruning

- [Ornamental Grasses](#)
- [Blackberries and Raspberries](#)
- [Deciduous trees](#)
- [Summer-Flowering/Non-Flowering Shrubs](#)

### Scouting

- [Iris Leaf Spot](#)
- Apply fungicide for [Peach Leaf Curl](#) prior to bud swell

### Turfgrass

Cool season grasses:

- [Control broadleaf weeds](#)
- [Aerate lawn now through April](#)

Warm season grasses

- [Control broadleaf weeds](#)

## VEGETABLES

### Potatoes



Mid-March to April is planting time for spring potatoes. Begin with disease-free tubers from a reputable source. Potatoes from the grocery store may not produce a large yield compared with certified seed potatoes.

Early maturing varieties, especially in southern Kansas, are favorable so tuber development is complete prior to the summer heat. Cut the tubers into 1 ½ to 2-ounce pieces and store in a warm, humid location for two to three days. This time allows the cut to heal and prevents rot.

For the best success plant when the soil is at least 45 degrees F. Space seeds 12 inches apart in rows 3 feet apart in fertile, well-drained soil. Seeds should be planted two inches deep. Potatoes require regular watering.

Practice crop rotation, if possible, by avoiding planting in an area where tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, potatoes or tomatillos have been planted in the past three to four years.

As potatoes develop along the main stem protruding from the seed, pull loose soil up, or apply straw mulch, over the potatoes. This will prevent them from being sunburned. They will be ready for harvest when the vines are about half dead. (Kansas Garden Guide)

## FRUIT

### Planting Fruit Trees

It's time for establishing new fruit trees in Kansas. Here are a few tips to get started.

- Whether bare root or potted trees, store them in a shady location and keep watered until planting. Bare root trees may be potted temporarily to prevent against drying out if they won't be planted right away. Do not store bare root trees in water.
- Remove wires, labels and anything else attached to the tree to prevent damage to the trunk and branches.
- Roots may require pruning prior to planting to avoid girdling which can result in nutrient deficiencies and poor growth.



- Dig a hole approximately three times the width of the root ball.
- Backfill the soil to completely cover the root ball, but avoid covering the graft.

You can access our complete publication for planning your fruit garden through the KSRE bookstore: [Planning your Fruit Garden](#).

### Pruning Raspberries and Blackberries

March is time for pruning raspberries and blackberries. Though perennial plants, the canes are biennial. While each plant can survive several years, each cane (branch) lives for two years. The first year for each cane is a growth year. The second year is for fruiting. After the second year, the canes should be pruned out. Everbearing red raspberries and blackberries are the exception as they produce fruit on first year canes.

See our publication on [Raspberries and Blackberries](#) for details about proper pruning.

## FLOWERS

### Iris Leaf Spot



Iris leaf spot is re-appearing in the landscape. Remove the dead leaves from last year to prevent spreading disease.

Iris leaf spot is a fungus that overwinters in the dead leaf material on the ground. As water or wind disrupts infected leaves, the fungal spores are transferred to the healthy new growth.

Disposing of dead leaves is the best prevention from spreading this disease.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### Seeds vs. Transplants



If you follow the garden calendar in the newsletter you've noticed you're instructed to plant some vegetables by seed and others by transplant. New gardeners may be wondering why this matters.

Starting plants from seed can initially be less expensive. Seed packets can be purchased from most home improvement and even grocery stores for \$2-4 each. There's also the cost of the seed-starting mix, containers and labels, but you can grow a lot of plants with minimal cost.

Transplants are often sold as four to six young plants in a pack. A pack of four may cost \$3 - \$4 depending on plant variety, but they already have established roots. This gives the gardener a jumpstart on the growing season without having to nurture tender seedlings.

It is important to note the proper timing for starting seeds or transplanting into the garden because of the impact of temperature. When the garden calendar says you can "direct sow" at a certain date, this means it is generally safe to start seeds for that

vegetable variety in the garden soil. If the garden calendar states you can transplant at a certain date, that means it is time to move transplants that were started indoors or purchased at a garden center into the garden beds. This time of year, the garden calendar often states you can “start seeds indoors”. This is for gardeners who wish to grow their own transplants to later be moved into the garden when the weather warms.



Some plants are recommended to start from seed while others are recommended as transplants. Root vegetables, such as carrots, turnips and beets tend to not transplant well. In these cases, direct-seeding into the garden is safest.

Cole crops such as broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage and Brussels sprouts can successfully be transplanted into the garden. In fact, transplanting is preferred so the plants will mature before the heat arrives and slows down production.

Peppers and tomatoes are two examples where transplanting is a better option. If we waited to start these plants from seed in the garden when the weather is warm enough to safely grow, our harvest would be significantly delayed. By transplanting, the plants can reach maturity sooner which means the harvest comes earlier.

### **Ornamental Grasses**

Cool season grasses are in their optimal growth period from late winter through early spring and also in the fall.

Ornamental grasses should be divided every three to five years, during dormancy, depending on how fast they grow. If the center of the plant is dying back, this indicates it is time to divide. The root mass of established grasses can be quite difficult to



separate. You may need to use a sharp shovel, knife or ax. Each section should have a healthy root system attached. Space plants at a distance equal to their height at maturity. Provide supplemental water regularly until plants are established.



Now is also the best time to cut back ornamental grasses before new growth appears. Grass blades can cause cuts so wear gloves to protect your skin. Cut plants back to six to eight inches above the ground. This allows new growth to flourish and keeps plants looking healthy.

<https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/mf3048.pdf>

## **COMMUNITY GARDEN CORNER**

The Overland Park Community Garden has been operating since 2011 and maintains an average of 42 active gardeners each year with a wait list of at least 50. Garden

founder, Beverly Jaderborg, shares her experience establishing and maintaining this community resource.

Read full article here: [Overland Park Community Garden](#)

## QUESTION of the WEEK



*“What is wrong with my cedar tree? We have a layer of these tips on the ground under the tree. We have two large cedars in the backyard. Only one seems to be dropping branch tips.”*



This time of year, squirrels are actively gathering materials for nesting. This branch sample appears to show damage from chewing which is likely the result of squirrels. There is no indication of damage to any other portion of the branch or foliage that would cause us to think this is disease or insect-related. This is most likely a short-term cosmetic issue because the trees are otherwise healthy and large.

## COMING UP NEXT WEEK...

In our **permaculture** feature we will share tips for creating a hügelkultur mound. Learn how to grow a successful crop of **asparagus** including managing the weeds. Turfgrass tips to include **sustainable lawn management**.

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<http://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/info-center/newsletters/index.html>

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