Video of the Week: Ten Tips for Selecting Plants

ANNOUNCEMENTS

2024 Kansas Turf and Ornamentals Field Day
August 1, 2024, at Rocky Ford Turfgrass Research Center in Manhattan, KS.
https://www.k-state.edu/turf/events/2024TurfFieldDayProgram.pdf

GARDEN CALENDAR

The warmer weather lately is tempting us to get those summer crops in the ground, but don’t be too hasty. Learn what to plant and what to be watching out for in the garden in April.

April Garden Calendar Fact Sheet

FRUIT

Protecting Apple Trees
Fungicide sprays in April and May are necessary to prevent diseases common to most susceptible varieties of apple trees. When leaves appear, it’s time for the first application.

Myclobutanil (Immunox, Fungi-Max and F-Stop Lawn and Garden Fungicide) is effective for controlling apple scab and cedar apple rust which are problematic in April and May. Applications should be made on a 7-10-day schedule.

For summer disease control look at Bonide Fruit Tree and Plant Guard. This insecticide/fungicide can be applied after the petals drop and is effective against sooty blotch and fly speck.

For organic treatments, Cyd-X is labeled for apple trees to control against codling moth. Apple bagging is a method of protecting fruit by covering it with a brown bag, think lunch bag, and restricting access for pests and diseases. This can be done in combination with early season fungicide applications to provide season-long protection. Here is a reference video to learn how to bag apples. University of Kentucky Extension – Apple Bagging

***Always follow the label recommendations and do not use insecticides during bloom period.
The best prevention for diseases and pests is proper cultural care. Thinning fruit to give at least 4-6 inches between each apple allows better spray coverage and reduces protection for codling moth larvae. Fruit that are found to be infected should be destroyed to prevent further infection/infestation. During dry spells, provide supplemental water to fruit trees throughout the root zone. Stake young trees and secure with a wide material that will not cut into the tree trunk. Maintain a 3-foot diameter weed-free barrier around trees to remove host plants and protect against damage from mowing. This will also remove competition for nutrients and water. If mulch is added, keep it a few inches away from the trunk.

You can read more by accessing our KSRE publication: **Spray Guide for Growing Apples at Home**

**Peaches, Nectarines and Apricots**

Late frost can prevent fruit from setting on these trees especially if they are in full bloom. Trees that will not develop fruit as a result of late frost do not need to be on a spray schedule. Trees that will bear fruit can be treated with a product that contains captan or myclobutanil (Imunox, Fungi-Max, Fertilome F-Stop Lawn and Garden Spray) from now until about two weeks before harvest with applications every ten days.

Visit the KSRE website **Common Plant Problems** to see treatment options for specific problems pertinent to fruit.

**FLOWERS**

**Butterfly Gardening Resources**

Butterflies are crucial for pollination and are a delight to host in the garden. Organizations have been established to support gardeners who recognize the value of butterflies. Using these guidelines and plant recommendations you can create a suitable habitat to help protect our ecosystem.

The North American Butterfly Association has resources for gardeners wanting to certify their landscape as a butterfly habitat. Here are the basic requirements essential for butterfly garden certification:

- At least three different caterpillar food plants
- At least three different native butterfly nectar sources
- No use of insecticides/pesticides (organic and synthetic)

You can see these requirements and apply online here: **Butterfly Garden Certification Program**
The Monarch Watch organization has a process to register your garden as a Monarch Waystation. There are over 46,000 waystations in the world providing habitats to support the population of monarch butterflies. Some basic necessary features of a waystation include:

- At least six hours of sunlight each day
- Milkweed plants- at least ten (preferably with two or more species (Visit Monarch Watch to see a list of native milkweed species by region.)
- Nectar plants – annuals, biennials, perennials

Regardless of the type of butterflies you are catering to, proper management of the habitat is necessary. This includes using mulch, thinning plants, fertilizing, amending the soil, watering and removing invasive plant species. Proper care minimizes the occurrence of diseases and pests which is particularly important since insecticides cannot be used.

**PESTS**

**Clover Mites**

Clover mites are about the size of a pinhead and can make their way into homes through the tiniest openings. The reddish color and long front legs make clover mites easy to identify.

Clover mites feed on over 200 plant varieties including clover, grasses, ivy and honeysuckle. They do not bite humans but can leave stains on curtains, walls and carpets if crushed. Removing clover mites from the home can easily be done with a vacuum, though they will continue to live inside the vacuum so dispose of them as needed.

Mites do not readily cross loose, clean, cultivated soil so maintaining a plant-free perimeter around the home can prevent them from entering. Limit the growth of host plants near the home and instead plant species that are not attractive to mites such as marigolds, petunias, geraniums and yews. Insecticidal soaps can kill clover mites on contact, but it may be preferable to contact a pest management professional if the problem persists.

Read more and see photos from KSRE Entomology.  [Clover Mite](#)

**TURF**

**Wild Violets in the Lawn**

Wild violets are popping up in lawns this time of year. The petite purple blooms serve as a food source to bees and other pollinators. However, broadleaf weeds found in the lawn compete with turfgrass for nutrients and water. The bottom line is each homeowner has to evaluate their lawn goals when
deciding how to maintain it and whether or not treatment is necessary.

For some homeowners, a uniform lawn is important. If you identify with this desire then you will need to follow proper maintenance guidelines to keep a dense lawn which can better combat weeds and pests. You may also need to consider using a postemergence herbicide to combat wild violets. Triclopyr is effective in cool-season turfgrass and can be found in Turflon Ester, Triclopyr Ester and Weed-B-Gon Chickweed, Clover & Oxalis. These products can be used for tall fescue and Kentucky bluegrass. Triclopyr products will cause severe injury to bermudagrass. Weed-B-Gon Chickweed, Clover & Oxalis is labeled for buffalograss and zoysia. Follow all label instructions and never spray on windy days or when the temperature is over 90 degrees.

Homeowners who enjoy variations of color and leaf shape in the lawn may choose to tolerate a certain amount of persistent broadleaf weeds. Some plants we often disregard as pesky weeds do have value for wildlife. Their presence can be managed with proper lawn maintenance and hand-pulling/digging to prevent them from overtaking the landscape while allowing early season pollinators to benefit from the food source they provide.

MISCELLANEOUS

Recommended Plants
Heading to the garden center to look for new plants?? We've got a resource to help! If you have space in your landscape to add new trees, shrubs, herbaceous perennials, take a look at the Recommended Plants link on the K-State Horticulture and Natural Resources website.

We have lists of recommended plants broken down into categories by region as well as plant type. Finding the right plant for the right place sets your garden up for success.

Organic Sources of Nitrogen
Prior to adding fertilizer to the landscape, get a soil test if one hasn't been done in several years. It is possible to add too much fertilizer which is a waste of money, can be damaging to the environment, can be associated with increased levels of insect damage and can hinder plant production. Whether using organic or synthetic fertilizers it is always important to follow the correct application rates and protocols. Even organic fertilizers can pollute the ground water and cause symptoms of toxicity in plants so begin any fertilizer regime with research.

Take care of the soil year-round. Soil that drains well and is cleared of rocks, weeds and debris will support healthy crops and use fertilizer applications more efficiently. Growing
cover crops is an excellent way to incorporate nitrogen back into the soil while also protecting it from erosion and compaction.

Organic sources of nitrogen are often found in animal manures. Manure that is at least partially composted is better than fresh because weed seeds will be less likely to germinate. Gardeners should follow EPA guidelines for incorporating manure into the soil for food crops to minimize health risks. Be aware of the risk of salt build-up due to salt content of manures. Do not add more than one-inch of manure per season unless a soil test has been done to evaluate salt levels.

Other organic sources of nitrogen include: blood meal, fish meal, bat guano and cottonseed meal. Keep in mind many organic fertilizers are slow-release and will become available over the season. Follow recommendations for proper application rates. Organic fertilizers often have lower nutrient concentrations and may require higher amounts to be applied. They can also be costly highlighting the importance of proper application rates and timing.

PERMACULTURE

Straw Bale Gardening

Do you struggle to garden because your landscape lacks soil space or your soil is a poor quality? Are you interested in learning new ways to garden? Do you like to try unique gardening practices? It’s not quite as simplistic as just planting in a straw bale, as the name implies, but with the following guide you have the steps to successfully prepare, plant and grow. [KSRE Straw Bale Gardening](#)

QUESTION of the WEEK

What’s wrong with my plant?

We receive many questions each week from gardeners wanting to know what is wrong with their plant. As we enter the busy growing season here are some tips to help you get the most accurate response possible in a timely manner.

- Begin by contacting your local extension agent. They are the most in tune with issues facing your region and may have a quick response for you. If they need a second opinion they will forward your question on to the appropriate extension specialist.
- Include as much information as possible with your question. Important details to include:
  - What is the plant?
  - How old is the plant? (When was it planted?)
  - Describe what you’re seeing. (i.e. symptoms include: pinhead-sized, brownish spots on new leaves)
COMING UP NEXT WEEK…

Educators and children alike are gearing up for summer which means school garden leaders are thinking about summer garden care. Next week we’ll share resources in the SCHOOL GARDEN feature to help prepare for the break from school.

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

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