Horticulture 2024 Newsletter
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1712 Claflin, 2021 Throckmorton Plant Science Center
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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

VIDEO OF THE WEEK:

Maintaining a Rain Barrel

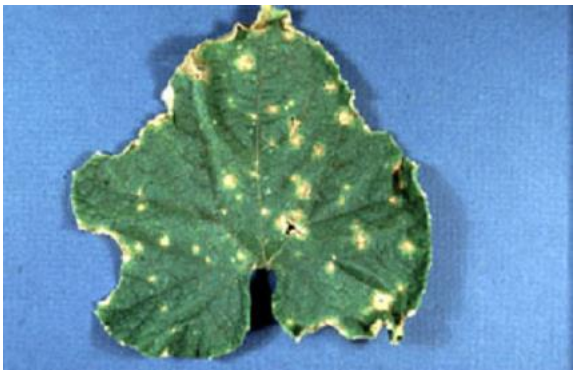
Learn what steps to take to maintain your rain barrel throughout the year from K-State Research and Extension's Cottonwood District.

GARDEN TO-DO

- Deadhead annual flowers as needed.
- Spray sweet corn for corn earworm if silks haven't turned brown yet.
- Take soil test if establishing or overseeding a lawn this fall.

VEGETABLES

Anthracnose on Cucumbers



Description: Anthracnose is a disease caused by a fungus which is most severe in cucumbers, muskmelons and watermelons. Anthracnose survives in plant debris and seeds. Infected leaves and fruit develop spores that spread easily by splashing water or contact with hands/tools. Anthracnose favors warm, moist conditions.

Damage: Infected leaves exhibit irregularly shaped brown spots that may have a hole in the center. Stems may become elongated and sunken when infected.

Control: Begin with resistant varieties and clean seed from a reputable distributor. Do not collect seed from infected plants. Practice crop rotation allowing three years between crops from the squash family. Use mulch and drip irrigation to prevent soil and water from splashing on the plants. Infected plants should be destroyed, not composted. Sanitize tools between use if they contact diseased plants.

Periodic fungicide applications may be necessary in mid-summer during wet weather. Apply chlorothalonil (Bonide Fungonil Concentrate, Daconil, Ortho Garden Disease Control, Fertilome Broad-Spectrum Landscape and Garden Fungicide, others) or mancozeb (Bonide Mancozeb Flowable).

FRUIT

When to Harvest Grapes

Waiting for grapes to ripen takes extra patience as the color matures before the rest of the fruit. Harvesting based on color alone will likely leave a bitter taste in your mouth as it takes several more weeks for the sugars to reach their peak and the tartness to subside. Waiting for the fruit to fully develop is important since grapes do not continue to ripen after harvest.

Prior to harvest look for a whitish coating on the grapes which indicates ripeness. Fully ripe grapes are usually slightly less firm than unripe fruit. Open one of the grapes and observe the seed color. Seeds of ripe grapes often change from green to brown. Finally, if all other measures indicate the grapes are ripe, do a taste test.

Grapes can be stored for up to eight weeks at 32 degrees F with 85 percent relative humidity. They can also be processed into jams and jellies.

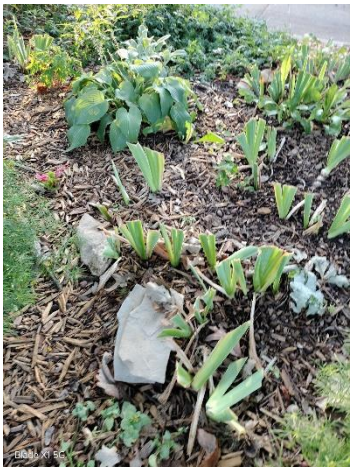
FLOWERS

Dividing Irises

Irises have a rhizome root system. Every year, each rhizome yields additional rhizomes creating a larger network of roots. After several years of this development, bloom production may slow down or halt altogether if the rhizomes become too crowded. This indicates it’s time to divide the rhizomes.

When the bloom season has ended dig the entire plant including all the rhizomes. Break the rhizomes apart by hand at the joints where they are connected. Healthy rhizomes should have roots extending below and a fan of leaf blades above. The rhizome should be firm and at least the width of your thumb. Discard any rhizomes that are soft, have an odor or do not have leaves protruding.

Trim the fan blades to about eight-inches cutting each blade at an angle to keep water from collecting in the thick, open leaves. Trimming the leaves prevents the plant from falling over while the roots become established. Dig a hole just deep enough that the top of the rhizome is slightly exposed when placed inside. Irises will tolerate poor soil conditions but well-drained soil is best. Space plants 12 to 18-inches apart and do not mulch. Irises do not respond well to over-watering; however newly planted rhizomes need to be watered in thoroughly.



Fertilize according to soil test recommendations or by applying a complete fertilizer, such as a 10-10-10, at the rate of 1 pound per 100 square feet. Mix the fertilizer into the soil to a depth of 6 inches. If your soil test shows high phosphorus levels, use a fertilizer that has a much higher first number (nitrogen) than second (phosphorus). It is important to get irises planted early enough in the season to allow roots to establish before the first hard frost.

Peonies

It's the time of year when two fungal diseases may appear on peony plants. Preventative care each year is the best control against them.

Peony measles, also referenced as red spot and leaf blotch, appears initially as purplish-brown circular spots on the top of the leaves. The spots on the undersides of the leaves are brown. Over time, more spots develop and eventually merge creating large, irregularly shaped blotches. Spots can appear on the stems, flower buds, petals and seed pods as the disease progresses.

Powdery mildew can infect a variety of plants. It presents as a white-grey powder on plant material. Powdery mildew is quite common in Kansas due to the warm, humid conditions.

Fortunately, both diseases are primarily aesthetic problems unless they become severe. Promote good air flow by spacing peonies several feet apart when planting. Individual plants can be pruned selectively during the growing season to improve circulation. Powdery mildew and measles overwinter in the soil on diseased plant material. At the end of the growing season cut peonies to the ground and throw out the plant material. Do not compost, especially if the

plants are diseased. Use drip irrigation, if possible, to keep water from splashing on the leaves. When leaves are wet, avoid handling them.

PESTS

Grasshoppers

Raise your hand if you're feeding grasshoppers in your garden right now. You're not alone. You are likely hosting several grasshopper varieties which increase in size as they molt and mature. Full-sized adults are the most problematic as they have wings and can cover more ground. They also have a tougher skin making insecticides less effective.

As with many problems in the garden, early action is important. Nets/floating row covers can be effective protection for small areas, though grasshoppers have been known to chew through netting. Gardeners who want to avoid synthetic treatments have to decide the amount of damage they can tolerate. In suburban areas, it is important for gardeners to work together to control grasshoppers and limit the destruction.

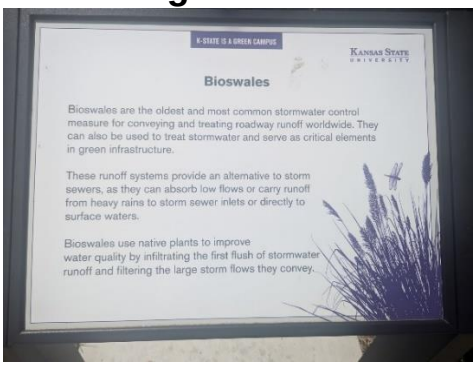
Insecticides are usually effective when the spray comes in direct contact with the grasshopper. Most have to be reapplied to eliminate new arrivals. Immature grasshoppers are limited in their range since they travel by foot. They are easiest to control at this stage.

Gardeners who choose to use insecticides will likely select one of the following options labeled for the widest variety of crops:

- permethrin (Hi-Yield Garden & Farm Insect Control, Eight Vegetable, Bonide Eight Vegetable, Fruit & Flower Concentrate, Bonide Eight Garden Dust),
- cyfluthrin (BioAdvanced Tomato & Vegetable Insect Killer),
- gamma-cyhalothrin (Spectracide Triazicide.

PERMACULTURE

Gardening with the Rain



Do you have an area in your landscape that holds water after the rain? Do you live near a road or other paved surfaces? Bioswales are a permaculture technique that allow land owners to use the rain in the landscape while protecting the soil and waterways from harmful effects of fast-flowing water.

Read more about bioswales in our KSRE publication: Gardening with the Rain.

QUESTION of the WEEK

Raccoons and Sweet Corn

Can electrified fencing be used to prevent raccoons from getting to my sweet corn plants?

Electrified poly-net fencing is a great solution for many folks for keeping raccoons out (see example: https://www.premier1supplies.com/p/raccoonnet-4-18-12-kit-electric-netting?cat_id=160).

If you already have fencing panels or welded garden fencing, adding 1 electrified strand above can also effectively exclude raccoons when they decide to climb.

Another option is the fencing in the photo to the right. This is a potentially less expensive option, but is also less durable and takes more time to set up.

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For questions or further information, contact your local extension agency.
This newsletter is also available on the World Wide Web at:
http://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/info-center/newsletters/index.html

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