

Horticulture 2024 Newsletter

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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: [Harvesting Onions \(Kansas Healthy Yards\)](#)



GARDEN TO-DO

- Renovate strawberry beds after last picking of fruit by cutting off leaves, fertilizing and narrowing row to 10 inches.
- Plant Fall Squash and Pumpkins
- Tip blackberries, black raspberries and purple raspberries as needed.
- Sidedress tomatoes when they are full size but still green. Overfertilizing will prevent them from producing fruit.
- Core aerate zoysiagrass to prevent thatch buildup

VEGETABLES

Harvesting and Storing Onions



As onions reach maturity the tops begin to fall over. It is time to harvest when at least one-half of the tops have fallen over. Onions can be pulled or dug up leaving tops intact. Hang the bunches or spread them out but ensure they have good airflow and are out of direct sun in a warm location. It can take two to four weeks for the tops and necks to dry completely. Once dried, cut the tops and roots to ½-inch from the bulb. Store bulbs in a container

that allows air to circulate such as a loose basket, crate or mesh bag, at 32-40 degrees F with low humidity. If the temperature is too warm the onions will sprout. If the room is too moist roots will develop.

Read more KSRE publication: [Onions](#)

Tomato Plants Look Healthy but Aren't Setting Fruit



Summer heat is upon us which can impact our tomato plants. When the daytime temperature rises above 85 degrees F pollination can be reduced which causes plants to drop flowers. Tomatoes perform best when the temperature stays between 70- and 85-degrees F. Fortunately, our weather often returns to this range after a heat wave and tomato plants resume fruit production. Even when plants are not producing fruit ensure they are

receiving proper care to minimize stress and keep them healthy.

Though some varieties of tomatoes are less sensitive to the heat than others, their tolerance is only a few degrees different.

FRUIT

When to Pick Blackberries



Blackberries should be harvested at peak maturity for the best flavor. They will not continue to ripen after harvest so wait until the blue-black fruit has lost its shine leaving a duller surface. Preferably, fruit should be harvested on a dry day during the cool hours. When the fruit is removed the receptacle remains attached to the berry. The receptacle is the part that attaches to the stem and should easily separate from the plant if the

fruit is ripe.

Store freshly harvested blackberries in the refrigerator unwashed. Blackberries should be harvested every three to five days depending on weather and the cultivar.

Renewing Strawberry Beds



As you wrap up strawberry harvest time the beds should be prepared for next season. In the fall plants will develop fruit buds so renovating the beds now is important to avoid disturbing the plants later.

Begin by removing any weeds. Next, mow the strawberry plants down to two-inches tall. This will cut back the leaves but protect the crowns. Between the rows, cultivate the soil to remove

any plants that can create competition for the desired strawberry plants.

Fertilize strawberry plants with $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 pound (3-4 cups) of a complete fertilizer such as 13-13-13 (nitrogen-phosphorus-potassium) on each 25 feet of row. If a soil test shows adequate levels of phosphorus and potassium use $\frac{3}{4}$ pound (1.5 cups) of a 16-0-0 fertilizer instead. Lawn fertilizer with 30% nitrogen such as 30-0-3 or 28-0-3 can be used if nitrate of soda is unavailable but do not use one that has a weed killer or preventer. Use at a rate of $\frac{3}{4}$ cup per 25 row feet.

Soak the fertilizer into the rootzone with about one-inch of water. Each week of the summer strawberry beds should continue to receive at least one-inch of water either from rain or irrigation. Maintain weeds throughout summer to reduce competition.

PESTS

Sweet Corn Earworm



Description: Adult earworm moths have a wingspan of one to 1-1/2 inches. Males have light yellowish-green forewings. Females have yellowish or pinkish brown forewings. The center of the wings has a dark spot. Newly hatched eggs are white and dome-shaped but the color changes to reddish-brown. Larvae can vary in color including yellow, green, red and brownish-black with a brown head and hairs covering the body.

Life Cycle: Sweet corn earworm overwinters in the

soil. Adults emerge from underground and females lay eggs on the fresh silk of corn plants. Eggs hatch within two to five days. The larvae begin eating the silk and then move to the ear. Larvae reach maturity in 14-16 days, drop to the ground and pupate beginning the next generation.

Damage: Earworms initially feed on corn silks, but move to feeding on the kernels. Damage is typically restricted to the top 1 to 1-1/2 inches of the cob. There is usually only one earworm feeding per ear because they will cannibalize others.

Control: Once the earworm has reached the ear, control is ineffective. The shucks serve as a protective barrier for the worm. It is important to monitor the area for adult earworms and treat the crop every few days while new silks are growing. As adults lay

eggs the larvae will feed on the treated silks and die before making it to the ear. Insecticides are only needed the first two weeks of silking as that is the busy feeding time for the larvae. Homeowners can use cyfluthrin (Baythroid) or, as an organic option, Spinosad (Captain Jack's Dead Bug Brew; Natural Guard Spinosad, Monterey Garden Insect Spray).

Squash Vine Borer



Description: The clearwing moth is the adult of the squash vine borer and is about ½-inch long with metallic-green front wings and clear back wings. The abdomen is orange with black spots. Eggs are flat, brown and very small. Larvae resemble maggots with a whitish-cream colored body about one-inch long with a brown head.

Life Cycle: From late June through early July adult moths emerge from the ground to lay eggs. Eggs hatch in about one week and begin feeding within

the stems of squash plants. In four to six weeks the larvae pupate in the soil until the following summer. There is one generation of squash vine borer each year.

Damage: Squash vine borers feed on summer and winter squash as well as pumpkins causing yellowing leaves and wilting. Holes in the stems near the base of the plant along with the appearance of a sawdust-type material that is moist and green/orange colored are symptoms of squash-vine borer. One of the first indicators of a problem is when squash plants are wilted even during cool parts of the day.

Control: Treating plants that have active larvae is difficult. It is best to monitor plants for the adult moth and treat before the larvae can infest plants. Planting a successive crop of summer squash in early July is another control method. This allows the crop to mature when the borers are pupating rather than when they are most active. Crop rotation is another important control measure. Borers can be manually removed by slicing open the stem if you know the pest is present. Insecticide applications need to begin when the squash vines start to spread. Applications should be repeated every seven to ten days through the end of June. If using an insecticide, spray the crown and the base of the runners.

Some chemicals that may be used for borers are permethrin (Eight Vegetable, Fruit & Flower Concentrate; Garden and Farm Insect Control; Lawn & Garden Insect Killer) or bifenthrin (Hi-Yield Bug Blaster II, Bug-B-Gon Insect Killer or Lawn and Garden) applied as a spray or dust.

SCHOOL GARDEN CONTENT

Creating an Outdoor Classroom



Though outdoor classrooms are often thought of as a school garden resource, they can effectively be used for any subject matter. With a few design considerations, outdoor learning environments can support educators throughout the school bringing benefits to everyone involved.

Read more: KSRE Publication [Creating an Outdoor Classroom](#)

GARDEN SPOTLIGHT

Teachers who Garden



Though Donna had some experience gardening as a young child helping out her mother, it wasn't until she was an adult that she really learned to garden. Embracing learning through trial and error, Donna has experimented growing a variety of edible and ornamental plants. She has also looked for ways to simplify the maintenance so she can continue to garden regardless of physical limitations.

Read more about Donna's garden adventure: [Teachers who Garden](#)

QUESTION of the WEEK



Tomato Trouble and more Tomato Trouble

What can be done to stop Septoria Leaf Spot?

We've shared resources about problems with tomatoes, including Septoria leaf spot, but the questions persist, so we will address this topic again. Septoria leaf spot is a common problem for tomato growers in KS. The best control is prevention including crop rotation, mulching around tomato plants and staking/caging plants. Allowing good air flow is also important and can be encouraged by spacing plants as recommended. Gardeners who choose to use a fungicide need to start applying it before the problem is takes over. Plants usually become susceptible when the fruit is about the size of a walnut. Chlorothaloni is a good choice for fruiting plants due to the zero-day waiting period. Fungicides need to be applied thoroughly on the top and bottom surface of the leaf. If it rains the fungicide needs to be reapplied. If you aren't sure if you have a problem with Septoria leaf spot your local extension agent can help you diagnose it.



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