

Horticulture 2024 Newsletter No. 12 March 25, 2024

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

Video of the Week: Crabgrass Prevention in Lawns

<https://kansashealthyyards.org/all-videos/video/crabgrass-prevention-in-lawns>

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Companion Plants in Your Garden

Wednesday, April 3rd 12:00PM -1:00PM CST

Many gardeners have heard that marigolds repel pests in vegetable gardens, or that beans dislike fennel. These sentiments are often attributed to a practice called "companion planting." But does companion planting really work? Join Horticulture Agents Pam Paulsen & Laura Phillips for a discussion on the research behind companion planting as we dispel common myths and talk about what benefits companion planting can offer your garden.



Register Here!

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



Homesteading for Soil Health Workshop Saturday, April 13, 9:00AM-3:00PM

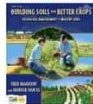
Clay, Dickinson, and Ottawa County
Conservation Districts Present:

HOMESTEADING for Soil Health WORKSHOP

Honeybees, blooms, and healthy soil! Ready to take your homestead to the next level? Join our free, fun, and informative event on homesteading, beekeeping, and soil health! Learn valuable skills and connect with local experts. RSVP today!



RSVP NOW
Scan the QR code or
call or text
785-407-0998



Participants will receive a complimentary copy of "Building Soils for Better Crops" (Quantities limited. While supplies last.)



Jason Graves

K-State Extension
"Pollinator Plants for Continuous Food Sources"



Jessica & Casey Kaudson

Glasco, KS
"Introduction to Beekeeping"



Shelby Beyer

Anchor Farms, Cheney, KS
"Anchored in the Soil: My Regenerative Journey"

April 13 9 AM-3 PM
Sterl Hall • 619 N Rogers St • Abilene, KS

Registration begins at 8:30 AM
Coffee/Doughnuts/Lunch provided



Callery Pear Buy-Back – Kansas Forest Service

Once favored as an ornamental shade tree, the Callery pear has become an invasive species. Though the spring flowers and fall color make it a tempting addition for the landscape, the susceptibility to storm damage and aggressive growth are undesirable. The second annual Callery Pear Buy-back supports property owners who would like to replace an invasive pear tree with a free native tree. Follow the link provided for details and registration information. <https://deeproofs.org/callery-pear-events/>

2024 Kansas Turf and Ornamentals Field Day

August 1, 2024, at Rocky Ford Turfgrass Research Center in Manhattan, KS. See the Field Day Program here: <https://www.k-state.edu/turf/events/2024TurfFieldDayProgram.pdf>

GARDEN CALENDAR

Planting

Crop	Type of Planting	Timing
asparagus	crowns	mid-March to mid-April
beets	seed	late-March to early-April
bok choy	seed/transplant	late-March to early-April
broccoli	transplant	late-March to early-April
cabbage	transplant	late-March to early-April
carrots	seed	late-March to early-April
cauliflower	transplant	late-March to early-April
chicories	seed/transplant	late-March to early-April
collards	seed/transplant	late-March to early-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
mustard	seed	late-March to early-April
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
strawberries	transplant	mid-March to early-April
Swiss chard	seed/transplant	late-March to early-April
turnip	seed	mid- to late-March

Pruning

- [Ornamental Grasses](#)
- [Deciduous trees](#)

- [Summer-Flowering/Non-Flowering Shrubs](#)

Scouting

- [Iris Borer](#)
- [Pests on Fruiting Apples](#) – Apply fungicide April and May
- [Iris Leaf Spot](#)
- Apply fungicide for [Peach Leaf Curl](#) prior to bud swell
- [Pear Rust](#)

Turfgrass

Cool season grasses:

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

Warm season grasses

- [Control broadleaf weeds](#)

FRUIT

Strawberries



From mid-March through early-April it's strawberry planting time in Kansas. As long as the soil is ready to be worked (not frozen or saturated) you can plant. If your soil hasn't been tested for a few years, it is best to have that done to inform your fertilization practices. Strawberry plants can be purchased from a reputable garden center.

<https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/mf598.pdf>

TURF

Crabgrass



Crabgrass is a summer annual. It germinates in spring and dies in the fall. Though it resembles desirable turfgrass with regards to the growth habit, it has a different texture and color creating a non-uniform lawn. It also sets seeds and can spread throughout the landscape. Lawns that are not well maintained are prime targets for crabgrass invasion.

It is easiest to control crabgrass before it germinates using preemergence. May 1 is typically when crabgrass is expected to germinate throughout much of Kansas, but this does vary depending on location and weather patterns. Many homeowners use signals from nature to determine preemergence timing.

A common guideline is to apply crabgrass preemergent when redbuds are in full bloom. While this is an indicator, it's not going to provide 100% accuracy since microclimates exist within each landscape. In warmer areas of the landscape, crabgrass is likely to germinate earlier.

Soil temperature is a useful indicator to predict crabgrass germination. Using the [K-State Mesonet](#) you can access the average soil temperature at a two-inch depth over

the past seven days. When the daily average is 55 degrees F for about five days, research suggests this is the time to apply crabgrass preemergence.

<https://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/horticulture-resource-center/common-pest-problems/documents/Crabgrass.pdf>

Why Weeds Invade Lawns

Instead of combatting weeds all season, take a proactive approach to prevent weeds. Here are some common reasons why weeds invade lawns.

- Improper Mowing: Mowing too low and too infrequently thins the turf, allowing weeds to get started.
- Improper Watering: Frequent watering encourages weed seed germination, disease, thatch, and a shallow-rooted turf that is less competitive with weeds for soil moisture and nutrients.
- Improper Fertilizing: Fertilizing too much, too little or at the wrong time may benefit weeds more than grass.
- Insect and Disease Injury: Weeds rapidly invade lawns that are thinned by insects and diseases.
- Compacted Soil: Soil compaction is a hidden stress on the turfgrass root system. The grass is unable to compete effectively with weeds.
- Excessive Wear: Turf areas used for recreation and sports are subjected to wear and compaction.
- Wrong Kind of Grass: The wrong kind of grass for the location will gradually decline and be invaded by weeds.
- Environmental Stress: Weeds often take over a lawn after it has been weakened and thinned from weather-related stress.
- Thatch: Excessive thatch causes shallow-rooted grass and contributes to insect and disease problems.



<https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/mf2385.pdf>

Turf Substitutes



Though a thick, healthy lawn can be a beautiful part of the landscape, if you're ready for change there are several alternatives to traditional turf. Japanese spurge, English ivy and periwinkle are three ground covers that are good options for an alternative lawn.

Certain ground covers perform well in compacted soils that are unsuitable for a traditional lawn. Areas with little sunlight may not be conducive to growing turf but can be a great environment for perennials. Keep in mind that it may take more time to establish a thick groundcover lawn and it won't tolerate heavy foot traffic, but

once established it will be less maintenance and can stand up to weeds. Here are a few ground cover options to consider:

- Bugleweed (*Ajuga spp.*)
- Periwinkle (*Vinca minor*)
- English ivy (*Hedera helix*)
- Creeping lily-turf (*Liriope spicata*)
- Lamb's ear (*Stachys byzantina*)
- Japanese spurge (*Pachysandra terminalis*)



Pollinator lawns are designed to provide sustenance for bees and other pollinators by combining turfgrass with flowering ornamentals. Though aesthetically this option lacks the uniformity of a manicured lawn, pollinator lawns require less irrigation, fertilization, mowing and weeding once established. It is important to select turfgrass species

that are compatible with the flowering plants and to choose ornamentals that fit the growing conditions. Here are some plants to consider for a pollinator lawn:

- Dutch white clover (*Trifolium repens*)
- Self-heal (*Prunella vulagris spp. lanceolata*)
- Creeping thyme (*Thymus praecox spp. arcticus*)
- Common violets (*Viola sororia*)
- Dandelions

When selecting a turf substitute beware of invasive growth habits. Lily of the valley and goutweed are two groundcovers that can be problematic if not managed.

SCHOOL GARDENS



It may seem natural for a seasoned teacher who is also a life-long gardener to create a thriving outdoor classroom. However, this is not a simple task. Integrating standards-based content into the garden requires extensive planning. Fortunately, there are resources available to guide teachers in this process.

Books in Bloom

Children's books are a lovely way to introduce lesson topics. There are many books with garden-related themes creating connections across the curriculum with opportunities to take the learning outdoors.

[Books in Bloom](#), by Mark Lubkowitz and Valerie Bang-Jensen, provides connections to the classroom with 17 different children's books. Complete lesson plans with hands-on activities are also included. Here is an example of one of the lessons written to accompany the children's book [Compost Stew](#):
<https://kidsgardening.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/BooksinBloom-lessonsample-compoststew.pdf>



Life Lab



Based in Santa Cruz, California, Life Lab has been providing garden-based education resources for decades. There are many lesson resources available to garden educators on their website as well as opportunities for professional development through virtual and in-person workshops. If you're in need of some inspiration for your educational garden, this is a great site to spend some time exploring. <https://www.lifelab.org/>

GARDEN SPOTLIGHT

The Gardens at North Elementary



What does it take to establish a successful school garden? Karen Nelson shares her story of collaborating with the Extension Master Gardeners, school personnel and the entire community of Goodland, Kansas to provide this mutually beneficial resource.

Read all about it! [The Gardens at North Elementary](#)

QUESTION of the WEEK



"I started a strawberry patch last year in a raised bed. In the fall I covered the plants with a thick layer of straw. Is it time to uncover them or should I wait until all chance of frost is past? I checked under a corner of the straw today and the straw is holding lots of moisture. The soil is still cool."

Wait to remove mulch from the strawberry bed until the soil temperature is about 40 degrees. You can use a soil thermometer to measure the temperature a couple feet into the planting and insert several inches into the soil. When it's time, you can remove the top layer of straw so the new growth can emerge. Leave the bottom layer of straw so the berries will not be resting on the soil surface as they develop.



Here is a video from K-State Research and Extension (KSRE) with further information: <https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/hort-judging/fruit-nuts/strawberry.html>

COMING UP NEXT WEEK...

Next week features “Mental Health Monday” See you next week!

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Kansas Garden Guide
K-State Turfgrass Blog

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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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