

Horticulture 2024 Newsletter

No. 44 November 4, 2024

1712 Claflin, 2021 Throckmorton Plant Science Center
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ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Hort Newsletter Fall-Winter Schedule

This newsletter is a collection of gardening topics for the ENTIRE MONTH of November.

For the months of November through February, the Hort Newsletter will switch to monthly distribution. You can expect a summary of the month's gardening topics the first Monday of each month during this time.

K-State Garden Hour Wednesday, November 6, 2024 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM

Register to attend this free webinar here:

<https://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/consumer-horticulture/garden-hour/>



Rabbit, Mole, & Deer Mitigation

Wednesday, November 6th 12:00PM -1:00PM CST

The presence of wildlife such as rabbits & deer can pose many potential problems for home gardeners, depending largely on which plants have been chosen for a landscape. Join Dr. Drew Ricketts, K-State Research and Extension Wildlife Management Specialist, as he discusses the plant life best for avoiding these issues, as well as other nuisance animal mitigation techniques.



Register Here!

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



The **74th Annual Kansas Turf & Landscape Conference** will be held on December 4 & 5 (Wednesday & Thursday) at the Hilton Garden Inn, Manhattan. The conference is an excellent way to learn about turf and landscape management, visit with old friends, network with new ones, and see all the latest products and supplies from local and national vendors. The conference has been approved for commercial pesticide recertification hours:



1 Core hour

3A - 7 hours

3B - 7hours

GCSAA education points and International Society of Arboriculture CEUs will also be available by attending the conference. For more information, visit:

<https://www.kansasturfgrassfoundation.com/>

VIDEO OF THE WEEK:

[Composting with Worms – Vermicomposting 101](#)

(Recorded K-State Garden Hour)



Learn how to use worms to support your composting efforts year-round.

GARDEN TO-DO

- Drain hoses and irrigation systems before winter
 - Fertilize cool-season lawns
- Dig and store tender bulbs after leaves are browned by frost
 - Water landscape plants, as needed, before winter
 - Plant spring-flowering bulbs

FLOWERS

Amaryllis

Amaryllis (*Hippeastrum*) is a classic bloom during the holidays. If you are purchasing bulbs, select the largest ones available that are firm and dry. If growth is visible, it should be bright green. Each bulb should produce three to four blooms on a one to two-foot stem. Larger bulbs will produce more flowers.

Amaryllises grow best in tight spaces. Select a container about one-inch larger in diameter and twice as tall as the bulb with drainage holes in the bottom. Hold the bulb over the container with the roots dangling to the bottom and add a sterile potting mix. Firm the soil



around the roots carefully to avoid damaging them. Leave the top third to half of the bulb visible above the soil.

Put the container in a sink and water thoroughly. When the water has stopped draining, set the plant in a warm, sunny location. As the flower opens move the plant away from direct sunlight and to a cooler location to prolong the bloom period which can last up to one month.

When blooming is complete, the amaryllis plant is still growing. Remove the bloom stalk to prevent the bulb from expending energy on seed formation. Move the container back to the sunny window. When the danger of frost has passed, you can gradually expose the plant to the outdoors by first moving it to an area with dappled shade. Over time move it to a location with six hours of full sun each day. Apply a balanced houseplant fertilizer monthly.

Prior to the first frost bring the amaryllis back inside and place it in a dark location. Stop watering it and when the leaves dry cut them off just above the bulb. Allow the bulb to rest for eight to twelve weeks with no water. When new growth appears or when you are ready to force the bloom, relocate the bulb to a sunny window and begin watering and fertilizing regularly. From dormancy to bloom it usually takes four to six weeks. Though amaryllises only require repotting every three to four years, the time to do this is after dormancy.

Winterizing Roses



Although most shrub roses are hardy through Kansas winters, many hybrid teas and other modern varieties require protection. It is important to winterize roses **AFTER** several hard frosts have occurred, but **BEFORE** the ground freezes.

Winterizing too early keeps the stems warm and moist which promotes. Winterizing too late risks damaging the sensitive graft union where the rootstalk attaches to the above ground growth.

Clean up plant debris in the area surrounding the roses to prevent diseases from overwintering. Mound soil or compost eight to ten inches high around each rose plant. Bring in new soil for this instead of displacing soil from the area around the roses to avoid exposing and damaging the roots.

Once the ground has frozen, add a 4-inch layer of straw, leaves, wood chips or other mulch over the mound and cover with a layer of soil to hold it in place. This will help protect the plants from the cold but also prevent early budding during warm winter and early spring days. As the mulch settles during winter you may need to add more.

Prune canes to 36-inches and remove weak or thin canes. Tie the remaining canes together loosely to keep them secure during windy weather. If the canes are allowed to whip in the wind it can cause damage to the crown and disturb the soil.

When the ground thaws in the spring remove the mulch and soil from the base of the plant to return the soil level to normal.

FRUIT

Winterizing Strawberry Plants

Whether your strawberry plants are young or established, mulching is necessary to protect them from winter damage. Sudden drops to freezing temperatures can kill fruit buds and injure roots and crowns. When the soil freezes and thaws repeatedly, plants can be heaved out of the soil exposing the roots.

A 3-inch layer of straw mulch can be applied to protect plants after they have been exposed to several frosts but before the heavy freezes begin. In Kansas, this timing usually falls between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

For more about growing Strawberries, visit our KSRE Publication: [Strawberries.](#)



TURF

Fall Knotweed Control



Knotweed, or knotgrass, is an aggressive warm season annual that reproduces by seed. It germinates in early spring resembling grass. Later in the season it develops into a flat mat up to two feet in diameter. The stems are slender and wiry with a papery sheath at each node giving them a knotted or swollen appearance.

Knotweed is commonly found in poor quality soils. This includes areas of compaction with poor fertility as often occurs near busy walkways.

Lawns with thin turf are susceptible to knotweed, particularly those with heavy traffic such as athletic fields.

Proper maintenance is the first step to controlling knotweed. Minimize/reduce soil compaction and manage turf density with recommended care protocols.

Knotweed germinates in late February to early March so if you plan to use a preemergence, it should be applied in late fall. If you will be re-seeding your lawn in the spring, DON'T use a preemergence. Contact your local Extension agent for

recommendations on knotweed control.

To read more about knotweed, visit K-State's Turfgrass resource: [Knotweed](#).

TREES

Wrap Trees to Prevent Sunscald and Frost Cracking



Sunscald affects young trees with thin, smooth bark. It is most common in late winter on the southwest side of the trunk. Exposure to sunlight and warm temperatures during the day heats up the tissues causing them to lose their dormancy. After sunset, when the temperature drops, these cells freeze and die. The result is large, irregular wounded sections of the bark on this side of the trunk.

Frost cracks are long splits in the trunk or stems. They are caused by old wounds and drastic changes in temperature heating and cooling the outer and inner layers of bark at different rates.

Tree wraps can be used during the winter to protect young trees from weather-related injury. Wraps can be purchased for this purpose and should be light-colored with some elasticity. The trunk should be wrapped starting at the base of the tree upward and stopping just below the lowest branches. This is only seasonal protection for trees during their first few years of establishment. Remove the wrap in the spring and never staple the wrap onto the trunk.

Colorado State University Extension has a helpful publication with the proper steps for wrapping a tree for winter protection: [Wrapping Trees for Winter](#). You can also read more at our KSRE publication: [Sunscald on Trees](#).

GARDEN SPOTLIGHT

Gardening Together for Over 60 Years!



Linda and Tom began gardening together in the 50s as childhood neighbors helping their parents harvest.

All these years later they are still gardening together. Even with the decades of experience they have, this year brought them a BIG surprise in the garden.

Read more about Linda and Tom in this month's Garden Spotlight: [Gardening Together for Over 60 Years!](#)

MISCELLANEOUS

Compost Pile Maintenance

Decomposition in the compost pile slows down as the weather gets cooler. Avoid turning the pile during this time of year since the inside of the pile is warmer and turning it to the outside will cool down the entire pile. The freezing and thawing that often takes place through the winter is actually beneficial for decomposition.



If you choose to add food waste to the compost pile through the winter months, recognize it will not decompose as quickly and could attract pests. You can prevent this by covering any scraps with a layer of dried leaves or bury them into the heap.

Keep the compost pile moist to promote decomposition. The pile should not be waterlogged however because this restricts oxygen and causes

rotting. The edges of the pile will dry out first and a light sprinkling of water may be sufficient if there has been no precipitation.

QUESTION of the WEEK



Why is my Croton Dropping its Leaves?

My houseplant, croton, is dropping leaves like crazy. Do you have any idea what may be causing this?

Croton (*Codiaeum variegatum*) needs bright, indirect light, high humidity and warmth in addition to consistent conditions. Sudden changes to the environment can cause leaves to drop. The soil should not be too saturated or too dry. It takes some time to establish the perfect conditions and then to ensure those are maintained to keep the plant happy.

Make sure the plant is placed in an east/west facing window or use a grow light for supplemental lighting. Keep the plant away from heating/cooling vents. As the temperature outdoor drops, avoid letting the plant touch the cold windows. If the window is older, it may be drafty which can cause problems as well.



Contributors:

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K-State Extension Turfgrass

Tree and Shrub Problems in Kansas: Diseases, Insects and Environmental Stresses

Division of Horticulture

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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>

The web version includes color images that illustrate subjects discussed. To subscribe to this newsletter electronically, send an e-mail message to hortsupport@ksu.edu listing your e-mail address in the message.

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