

Horticulture 2024 Newsletter

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1712 Claflin, 2021 Throckmorton Plant Science Center
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ANNOUNCEMENTS:



The **Kansas Forest Service's Conservation Tree Planting** Program offers tree and shrub seedlings, as well as other items for use in conservation plantings. Plantings may function as wildlife habitat, windbreaks, wood lots, timber plantations, or educational and riparian (streambank) plantings. Find out more and order trees by visiting: https://www.kansasforests.org/conservation_trees/



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:

[Soil Testing](#)



Fall is a great time to test your soil nutrients. Learn how to sample the soil correctly to get the most accurate results.

GARDEN TO-DO

- Remove plant debris from garden, compost healthy material
- Prepare houseplants to bring indoors
- Dig sweet potatoes before first frost

VEGETABLES

Pruning Trees and Shrubs



Woody plants are actively building up their storage of sugars as they approach leaf drop. Pruning in the fall limits this process and reduces the amount of energy the plants have available through dormancy. Also, pruning now may encourage woody stems to send out new growth that will be more susceptible to freeze damage during winter.

With the exception of removing dead or diseased branches, it is best to save pruning until after winter. For shrubs that bloom in spring, pruning in the fall can reduce flowering. Spring-flowering shrubs, such as forsythia, lilac, flowering quince, almond, beautybush, deutzia, pyracantha, mock orange, cotoneaster, weigela, viburnum and witch hazel should be pruned after they bloom.

Summer-blooming shrubs, such as hydrangea, rose of Sharon, butterfly bush and crepe myrtle, can be pruned in early spring because the blooms establish on new growth. With a few exceptions, most deciduous trees respond best to late winter/early spring pruning. Proper timing of pruning allows trees to go into dormancy healthy, without increased stress from pruning.

FLOWERS

Clean up Iris Beds this Fall

Removing debris from iris plantings is important to help minimize problems. Iris borer eggs and iris leaf spot survive in plant debris through the winter. By removing debris from the garden, you are reducing the spread of these problems the following growing season.

Healthy iris leaves can be left intact; they do not need to be cut back.



MISCELLANEOUS

Getting Answers to your Garden-Related Questions

When you need help identifying a plant or problem in your garden or landscape, your local Extension agency is a great resource. Whether submitting a live plant sample or a photo, providing as much information as possible will help your agent give more timely

and accurate responses. Here are some recommendations to consider as you prepare your horticulture questions.

Live Plant Samples:

- For small plants, include as much as possible: roots, stems, leaves, flowers and fruits.
- Gently shake away loose soil but do not wash roots.
- Prevent wilting by placing roots in a plastic bag and keep them moist.
- Stems, leaves and other above-ground growth can be covered in newspaper, *not* plastic.
- Harvest the sample as close to the day you will deliver it as possible.
- For trees, shrubs and vines include a branch, approximately one- to two-feet in length, with several buds/leaves.
- Store plant sample(s) in a box in a cool, dark location until it is delivered to prevent wilt.



Photo Submissions:

- Include a photo of the entire plant and growing site.
- Include a photo of the leaves, stems, buds, fruit and flowers up close.
- Show how large the plant parts are by including a scaling item, such as a ruler, next to the plant part(s).
- Ensure photos are in focus.
- If plant has symptoms of disease or pest damage, include images of healthy and unhealthy plant material.
- Include a photo of the plant against a solid background so the plant stands out. Examples of background could be a piece of paper or your hand.



Sending in photos to accompany a live sample is a great way to show the surroundings where the specimen is growing and can aid in identification. In general, include enough information in your plant sample, whether live or digital, to tell a complete story.

Fall is a Good Time for Soil Testing

Soil tests are useful tools to evaluate the pH and nutrients in the soil. A separate soil test is needed for each area of the landscape that will be planted. For example, soil from the lawn should be tested separately from soil in the garden.

Steps for Taking a Soil Sample:

- Identify six to ten spots within the area to be tested.
- Use a soil probe or shovel to collect soil 8-12 inches deep in each spot.
- Remove debris and combine all of the samples collected from this area in a bucket to create a representative sample.
- Remove one pint of soil and place it in a container. A clean milk carton, resealable bag or similar container will work.
- Label the container with your name, address and information about what you plan to grow in this area.



Your local agriculture or horticulture agent will either test the sample in the county soil lab or send it to the K-State soil testing lab. Your agent will make recommendations based on the results provided by the lab.

We recommend soil testing in the fall/winter before spring planting. This gives you time to make plans for soil improvement and avoid delays from the soil test labs which tend to be busier in spring.

Need help finding your Extension agent? Check out this map: <https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/about/statewide-locations/>

MENTAL HEALTH MONDAY

Season Extension for Prolonged Health Benefits



The seasons are changing but your mood doesn't have to decline with the temperature. Keep your garden growing by using season extenders and reap the rewards of physical and mental well-being.

Learn more about gardening with season extenders:
[Combat Seasonal Affective Disorder](#)

QUESTION of the WEEK



Landscaping on a Slope

We have a sloped landscape (40% grade) and are considering establishing a lawn. Will this work?

Maintenance is a primary concern with establishing a lawn at this percent grade because mowing becomes difficult at this angle. Additionally, water is going to drain away rapidly rather than being absorbed into the soil. This will make establishing a thick, healthy lawn challenging and may give weeds the opportunity to take over. Many of the problems in the lawn/landscape are prevented by maintaining healthy plants. If you're unable to establish a dense lawn you are setting yourself up for a battle with other issues that may take advantage of the stressed turfgrass.

Some options to consider instead of a traditional lawn is growing native grasses or groundcover. These plants will not require mowing and once established will need minimal water. If turfgrass is still desired, Buffalograss could be considered since it requires minimal mowing. Fine fescues look nice when the tops lay down so mowing would not be necessary. Regardless of which plants are selected, extra attention will be required during establishment to ensure they are receiving enough water.

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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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