

Horticulture 2024 Newsletter

No. 42 October 21, 2024

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Hort Newsletter Fall-Winter Schedule

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.

The **74th Annual Kansas Turf & Landscape Conference** is 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:

[Extend the Life of Garden Tools](#)



Protect your tools with proper maintenance including end of the season clean-up.

GARDEN TO-DO

- Check soil temperature at our [Weather Data Library](#). Spring flowering bulbs can be planted as long as the soil temperature stays above 40 degrees F.

VEGETABLES

Cool-Season Vegetable Hardiness



Don't be fooled by the term "cool-season". Not all cool-season crops will tolerate the winter in Kansas without protection. Semi-hardy crops such as Chinese cabbage, collard, mustard and radishes, can survive light frosts. However, when temperatures drop into the 20s, they will start to show signs of damage.

Cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, carrots and other hardy vegetables will survive temperatures into the low 20s before showing damage.

Row covers can be used to protect your cool-season garden.

Learn more about season extension from the [Kansas Garden Guide](#).

FLOWERS

Perennial Garden Clean-Up

If you're feeling the urge to tidy up the perennial garden keep a few things in mind. Ornamental grasses and some herbaceous perennials can be left intact to provide seasonal interest. Dried foliage brings texture and color to the otherwise barren landscape while also insulating the plant crown. Wildlife can benefit from seed heads left to develop on the plant.

If your plants had disease/pest issues during the growing season that plant material should be removed and disposed of to prevent spreading. Dried ornamental grasses near structures can present a fire hazard so removing the above ground growth is recommended in this scenario.



TREES

Fall Color on Trees



Many gardeners are aware leaves are responsible for making food for plants through the process of photosynthesis. Chlorophyll in the leaves captures energy from the sun resulting in their green pigment. Chlorophyll production slows down this time of year because the amount of daylight decreases. With this change in chlorophyll, the green leaf color of trees begins to fade allowing other pigments to be visible.

If tree leaves are turning orange/yellow, that indicates the presence of xanthophylls and carotenes. Tannins produce brown colors and anthocyanins create red/purple colors. These pigments are present year-round but are only noticed when the green from the chlorophyll fades. This is the reason for fall color in trees.

Fall color varies by tree species as well as environmental conditions. Certain oaks and maples put on a brilliant display with a variety of colors, but some species only show one color before leaf drop. The level of pigmentation is different among each species. Fall leaf color can be cut short by frost and freezes, but even the summer weather has a role with the fall display. If you notice the same trees looking different this fall than last, it is likely an environmental factor that is at work.

MISCELLANEOUS

Caring for Plants Indoors

If you moved sensitive plants indoors recently to save them from the sudden temperature drop you may be wondering, now what??? Hopefully you were able to transition your plants to the indoors, but if not, they may go through a period of shock. Symptoms may include: yellowing leaves, dieback and wilt. Some plants won't survive the shock if it is extreme. Others will recover over time and with proper care. It is expected that plants intended for a tropical location, or just a warmer USDA zone, will not perform their best indoors. Here are some tips for providing the best conditions possible to get them through the winter.



Water and Fertilizer

Whether indoors or out, the amount of light decreases into fall and winter resulting in slower plant growth. This means the fertilizer and water needs will decrease. Only provide water when the soil is dry about one-inch deep. Fertilizer can be applied at $\frac{1}{4}$ the recommended rate in November and again in February. Plants in smaller containers often require water more frequently but less fertilizer because they have less soil. This varies based on species so do your homework and research individual plant needs.

Temperature

Temperature is another important factor for growing plants indoors. If the temperature drops below 50 degrees F, leaves of more sensitive plants may begin to yellow. Keep this in mind if you adjust the thermostat during times when nobody is home such as vacations.

Humidity

Relative humidity is the amount of moisture in the air. When the humidity is lower, plants release more water from the leaves. Many common indoor plants prefer high relative humidity. To increase the relative humidity, you can create a microclimate by grouping plants closer together. Another option is to place a shallow container below each plant

and fill it with water. Elevate the container by placing some gravel in the saucer so the plant isn't soaking directly in the water. Misting plant leaves is often recommended, but is not a practical strategy to effectively increase humidity.

Light

Indoor plants should receive bright, indirect light either from a window or grow lights. Avoid placing plants too close to windows that are drafty or next to heat vents. Some indicators that your plants are not receiving enough light include:

- Elongated internodes (space between leaf/stem unions)
- Pale foliage color on new leaves
- Dieback of older leaves



QUESTION of the WEEK



Too Many Acorns

My lawn is being littered with acorns and I cannot keep up with gathering them. Is there a way to prevent my tree from dropping so many acorns?



Similar versions of this question come through for various tree species related to the mess they make. Our first point is to pay careful attention to the details of plant growth and fruiting habits during the selection phase of landscaping. Choose trees and place them appropriately in the landscape to avoid these issues.

In theory, there are products that can make acorns abort before they enlarge, but the timing is critical and very difficult to achieve with consistency. The efficacy of these products will also vary from one species to another since the fruiting habit differs. The investment of these types of products is not usually worthwhile.

Rest assured, cleaning up all the acorns in the lawn and landscape is not a required task since squirrels and other animals will usually do the job for you. There are tools available to assist with gathering acorns such as a garden rake and lawn vacuum. The approach each gardener takes will vary.

Contributors:

Cynthia Domenghini, Instructor and Horticulture Extension Specialist
Kansas State University Extension Specialists
Kansas Garden Guide

Division of Horticulture
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Manhattan, KS 66506
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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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