

Horticulture 2025 Newsletter No. 18 September 30, 2025

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

K-State Garden Hour

Wednesday, October 1, 12:00 (noon) – 1:00 PM CST

Register to attend this free live webinar at the following link: [K-State Garden Hour](#)



Keys to Successful Community Garden Spaces

Wednesday, October 1st 12:00PM -1:00PM CST

Community gardens are vital spaces for growing healthy food, fostering community connections, and enhancing personal well-being. Join Laura Phillips, Meadowlark District Horticulture Agent, as she explores the evolution of community gardens, common pitfalls to avoid, and offers guidance on establishing and sustaining a successful garden in your neighborhood. Bring your questions about creating a public garden space in your community!



Register Here!

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



Kansas Turf & Landscape Conference

The 75th Annual Kansas Turf and Landscape Conference will be held on **December 3 and 4 (Wednesday and 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 7 hours

GCSAA education points and International Society of Arboriculture CEUs will also be available by attending the conference.

Download a copy of the program, get exhibitor information or register online at:
<https://www.kansasturfgrassfoundation.com/>

Register before November 21 to receive a discounted rate.

GARDEN TO-DO

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

VEGETABLES

Fall Planting: Asparagus & Rhubarb

Asparagus and rhubarb are traditionally transplanted in mid-March through mid-April. However, they can be moved successfully in the fall if you wait until the tops have turned brown.



After frost hits and the asparagus and rhubarb tops turn brown, cut them back to the ground and prepare the soil as you would for spring planting. Dig the plants and relocate as needed. Water well and add mulch to the rhubarb so the roots do not heave out of the soil during winter. Since asparagus is planted deeper it does not require mulch.

If you are purchasing new asparagus plants, they can be planted from early October through mid-November. Begin with healthy crowns from a reputable source.

Visit these K-State resources for more information:

- Asparagus: <http://www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/mf319.pdf>
- Rhubarb: <http://www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/ep99.pdf>

Peppers from the Garden

Peppers can last several weeks stored in the fridge especially if they are kept moist. They can also be frozen for longer term storage. Cut the peppers into slices or chunks and place in a single layer on a baking sheet. Freeze for one hour. This is called “flash freezing”. The pepper pieces can now be stored in a freezer bag and won’t stick together in a clump. Although frozen peppers may be soft or even



mushy when defrosted, they maintain their flavor and work great for cooking.

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 reduce the spread of these problems the following growing season.

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



TURF

Should You Let Turf Grow Tall in the Fall?



Some people believe taller grass in the winter provides insulation for the plant crowns and protects them from freezing temperatures. This can cause problems when the tall grass blades fall over and create a matted environment perfect for winter diseases.

The best way to prepare turf for winter is to provide adequate care and ensure your plants are healthy.

This requires action year-round including fertilizing, watering and mowing. Follow recommendations for the variety of turf you are growing, but overall, maintaining the proper height throughout the year is best.

These are the recommended mowing height ranges (in inches) for home lawns in Kansas:

Tall fescue: 2.5 -3.5

Kentucky bluegrass: 2-3

Buffalograss: 2-3

Bermudagrass: 1-2

Zoysiagrass: 1-2

Mowing height can vary within species during specific times of the year. For example, warm-season grasses may be mowed taller during late summer and early fall so they can store more carbohydrates for the winter. It may also help to reduce the occurrence of cool-weather diseases. However, the taller height should still be within the recommendation.

MISCELLANEOUS

Pruning Trees and Shrubs

Woody plants are actively building up their storage of sugars as leaf drop approaches. Pruning in the fall limits the amount stored reducing 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.

Finding an Arborist

Unfortunately, part of growing plants is dealing with damage and death. For trees, this often requires professional help due to the plant size and safety concerns. Extension agents and specialists across the state get many questions each week about whether or not a tree with damage from storms or other stress can be saved. Extension agents can support homeowners by helping to identify problems with trees but when large limbs threaten to drop, especially over structures, parking and areas people are present, it's time to consult a certified arborist for advice.

Certified arborists are professionally trained and have experience managing trees in the landscape. The continuing education required ensures they are up to date on current techniques, problems and strategies. They also have the insurance necessary to support their decisions.



Whether you are facing tree removal or not, pay attention to your property's canopy. If you have mature trees, consider adding younger trees to the area. This will take away some of the sting as trees need to be removed allowing the younger trees to take their place. Managing the existing trees properly and choosing the right trees for your landscape are important to protect your investment.

Locate a certified Kansas arborist: [Kansas Certified Arborists](#)

Learn more about why hiring an arborist is important: [Trees are Good](#)

QUESTION of the WEEK



Unripe remaining tomatoes

What should I do with the tomatoes that remain on my plants but aren't ripening?

Remaining tomatoes can be left on the vine to ripen as long as there isn't a frost in the forecast, but ripening is slow at this time of year.

Green tomatoes that are full-sized can be harvested and placed in a paper bag to continue ripening indoors. You may notice a white, star-shape on the bottom of mature green tomatoes. Green tomatoes can also be used for a variety of recipes.



Tomatoes with blemishes or cracks in the skin should be discarded to avoid contaminating others. Store ripe tomatoes on cardboard trays with newspaper between layers if stacked. If possible, keep the temperature close to 55 degrees F. Check periodically for rotting and remove tomatoes as needed.

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For questions or further information, contact: hortsupport@ksu.edu.

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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