



Horticulture Newsletter

July 28, 2026

KANSAS STATE
UNIVERSITY

Horticulture and
Natural Resources

Video of the Week:



Mulching flowerbeds is one of the many ways to help plants during periods of hot, dry conditions during the summer months. In addition to conserving soil moisture, mulch has many other benefits, including cooling soil temperatures and preventing weeds. [This week's video covers tips on applying mulch the garden](#) and discusses tips for maximizing those benefits when adding mulch to your garden: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DSBeb2sl0Tg>

Announcements:

August K-State Garden Hour:

Join us next week, on Wednesday, August 5, 2026, for the next K-State Garden Hour webinar on "Local Food Gardening Projects in Kansas". The presentation will be live from Noon to 1pm. Explore with us the K-State demonstration gardens and programs across Kansas that help give back to the community through education, volunteerism, and shared produced harvests. Register to join us live, or view the recording afterwards online at: <https://ksre-learn.com/KStateGardenHour>

#KSTATEGARDENHOUR

K-STATE GARDEN HOUR

Local Food Gardening Projects in Kansas
Wednesday, August 5th 12:00PM -1:00PM CST

Extension is committed to community success and expanding access to healthy food. Join K-State Horticulture Agents from around the state to learn more about food gardening initiatives in Kansas. Explore the success stories of these gardens and discover how these programs give back to the community through education, volunteerism, and shared harvests. Dive into practical strategies that inspire collaboration and help expand food gardening opportunities statewide.

Register Here!

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

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY Extension

Become An Extension Master Gardener:

The Extension Master Gardener program is built on a simple but powerful idea. Volunteers receive horticulture training from K-State specialists, develop science-based gardening skills, and put that knowledge to work in their local community through education and local garden projects. The Master Gardener Program empowers individuals to transform from learners to leaders. From inspiring kids to helping adults, Master Gardeners are a

powerful force for good. [Visit our website to learn more](#) about the path to becoming an Extension Master Gardener volunteer in Kansas by applying this summer for upcoming fall training: <https://extension.k-state.edu/master-gardener/get-involved/volunteer.html>

Last Chance To Register For The John C. Pair Horticulture Research Center Field:

The poster features a photograph of a golf course with people and tents in the background. The text 'KANSAS TURF & ORNAMENTALS' is in the top left, 'K-STATE Research and Extension' is in the top right, and 'FIELD DAY' is in large letters across the middle. A 'KTF KANSAS TURFGRASS FOUNDATION' logo is in the bottom right.

KANSAS TURF & ORNAMENTALS

K-STATE
Research and Extension

FIELD DAY

KTF
KANSAS TURFGRASS FOUNDATION

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

THURSDAY, AUGUST 6, 2026

JOHN C. PAIR HORTICULTURE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION CENTER
1901 E. 95TH ST. S - HAYSVILLE, KS

REGISTER NOW <https://2026turfday.eventbrite.com>

Pesticide recertification credit hours for Commercial applicators
1 hr in 3A, 1 hr in 3B
25 GCSAA education points
ISA: 1 hour CA, TC, UF
0.5 hr BCMA Mgmt, BMA Practice

- ✓ NTEP Tall Fescue and Bermudagrass Trials - Dr. A.J. Lindsey
- ✓ Disease Management in Turf and Ornamentals - Judy O'Mara
- ✓ Turfgrass Cultivation Tips - Dr. Ross Braun
- ✓ Summertime Turf Weed Control Tips - Dr. Aaron Patton
- ✓ Annual Flower Trials, Mulch, and Water-Wise Landscapes - Matthew McKernan, Brenna Johnson, Alex Stanton, Dr. Cheryl Boyer
- ✓ Insect Management in Turf and Ornamentals - Dr. Raymond Cloyd
- ✓ Ornamental Tree Evaluations - Dr. Jason Griffin
- ✓ Managing Small Vertebrate Pests - Dr. Drew Ricketts

Box lunches will be available to take as you leave after the tour.

This is the final week to register for the Horticulture Industry Field Day at the John C. Pair Horticulture Research Center. This event is designed for the horticulture industry from across Kansas, and is scheduled for Thursday, August 6, 2026 from 8:00am to Noon. Presentations and tours will begin around 8:45am, and rotate between various research plots and educational stations. There will opportunities to visit with commercial exhibitors and earn numerous credit hours for various green industry licenses. The cost is \$35.00 per ticket and includes a boxed lunch. Pre-registration is required, and must be completed online by Monday, August 3rd. Learn more about this upcoming event online and sign up today at: <https://blogs.k-state.edu/turf/kansas-turf-ornamentals-field-day-returns-august-6/>

For home gardeners and plant enthusiasts, join us for a free **Public Open House on Saturday, August 8, 2026**. This is a free, come and go event for the whole family. Experience an up-close look at current research, take a tram ride tour around the station, and participate in interactive booths. There will be activities for all ages of the community. Learn more at: <https://www.sedgwick.k-state.edu/news/newsreleases/2026/Pair-Center-Public-Open-House-26.html>

Garden Calendar:

- Renovate June bearing strawberry beds after fruit production has stopped.
- Plant sweet potatoes now. Sweet potatoes can be planted from mid- to late-May through June.
- Pinch herbs to keep bushy and fresh with new growth.
- Once the foliage from spring bulbs has turned completely brown, it is safe to remove dead foliage.
- Deadhead spent flower blossoms to encourage annuals and perennials to continue flowering.
- Core aerate zoysia, Bermuda, and buffalograss lawns for removal of thatch and overall vigor.
- Fertilize zoysia & bermudagrass lawns with high nitrogen fertilizer such as 27-3-3 or 46-0-0.
- Check for bagworms and control as needed.
- Prune hedges as needed to maintain shape.
- Fertilize houseplants throughout the summer months to encourage growth.

Vegetables:

Tips For Harvesting Produce At The Peak Of Ripeness (Part 2):

As home vegetable gardeners work to harvest fruits and vegetables at the “peak of perfection”, we want to provide additional tips for the perfect timing of harvest. Timely, regular harvests are important to not only maximize the quality of your produce, but to spread out the harvest season and in some crops, improve the overall yields.

Although individual preferences on produce may vary, here are a few guidelines to help judge when fruits and vegetables have their best flavor, nutritional value and appearance for harvest:

Cucumber: Harvest firm, dark-colored cucumbers while the skin is tender and before the seeds become half-size (developing a hard seed coat). This varies greatly by variety, but for most cucumbers, this will be a size between 1.5 to 2.5 inches in diameter and 5 to 8 inches long. Small cucumbers may be harvested for pickles at any stage. If cucumbers become too large, it is still important to remove large, overgrown fruits to help extend the productivity of the vines.

Green Beans: Harvest green beans when the pod is crisp, smooth, and tender. Watch the size of the seeds closely, and harvest before the seeds enlarge significantly (approximately one-fourth their normal size). As pods continue to mature, the pod becomes tougher and beans swell and visibly bulge along the pod, becoming too large to eat fresh.



Squash: Harvest summer squash and zucchini when fruit is young and tender and before the skin and seeds have toughened. This is usually when squash are 6 to 10 inches long. The skin of the squash should be tender and easily punctured by a thumbnail. Squash develop quickly, and regular harvesting is important to encourage continued production.

Sweet Corn: Harvest sweet corn when kernels are plump, tender, and filled to the tip of the ear. Check a few ears for maturity by opening the top of the ear and pressing your fingernail into a few kernels - if milky juice appears the corn is ready for harvest. At this point silks on the outside of the ear will also be beginning to dry. Twist and pull the ear from the plant by bending the ear down sharply.

Visit our [Harvest and Storage of Fruits and Vegetables publication](https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/harvest-and-storage-of-fruits-and-vegetables_MF661.pdf) for more tips on determining how to harvest produce at the peak of perfection: https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/harvest-and-storage-of-fruits-and-vegetables_MF661.pdf

Fruit:

When To Pick Peaches:

This time of year, peaches begin to ripen quickly and are ready for harvest, so trees should be checked frequently to monitor peach ripeness. While peaches will be most flavorful when they ripen on the tree,

peaches will continue to ripen once harvested. In some cases, growers may want to harvest peaches before they are fully ripe to prevent fruit damage from birds, squirrels, and insects. Some people will also prefer firmer, early picked peaches for use in canning, jams, and jellies.

When a peach ripens will depend on variety, location, and growing conditions. Even on the same tree, not all peaches will ripen at the same time. It is important to know the signs to look for in a ripened peach to harvest at the peak of maturity and flavor. Indicators of peach ripeness include suture filling, ground color, flesh color, firmness, size, ease of removal, and aroma.



Suture Filling: As peaches begin to reach maturity, they will become rounded. Peaches are not perfectly round, however, as they contain a shallow crease or indentation that runs along the side of a peach, called a suture. The suture marks the line where the two halves of the fruit's ovary joined together during development. A well-developed peach will be evenly rounded on both sides of the suture.

Color: The reddish coloration outside the peach (called the blush) is not a good indicator of ripeness. Instead, look for what is called the “ground color”. This is the base color of the peach, and is part of the peach that does not turn red, for example, around the stem. The ground color of the peach will lose its greenish tinge and turn yellow or white when the peach is mature enough to harvest. For yellow-fleshed peaches, a yellow ground color should develop, and white-fleshed fruit will have a whitish ground color. In either scenario, if there is any green in the ground color, it is too early to harvest. It may be just as useful to use ground color as a good characteristic to determine when not to pick a peach as it is to know when to harvest. If the ground color is yellow and the suture rounded on both sides, then move to the next characteristic.

Ease of Removal: A mature peach will separate easily from the branch if the peach is lifted and twisted. If it does not, it is not mature enough to pick yet. Since not all peaches will be ready to pick at the same time, pick only those that are ready and come back later for more. It will often take 3 to 5 pickings to harvest a peach tree.

Firmness: When harvesting peaches, it is often most desirable to harvest peaches that are slightly firm, and do not give when lightly squeezed. This will help to minimize damage during transport and provide a longer shelf life. Allowing peaches to sit inside on the counter at room temperature for a few days will allow peaches to soften. Once peaches are at the desired level of ripeness, they can be refrigerated to preserve them for a longer period of time. Peaches can usually be stored for up to two weeks.



Flowers:

Dividing Iris:

Bearded iris are a perennial plant that is well adapted to Kansas and blooms beautifully each spring. Iris require minimal maintenance and multiply quickly. After several years, however, iris outgrow their allotted space, the centers of the clumps tend to lose vigor, begin to die out, and the overall number of flowers decline, primarily only blooming on the outside of the clump. At this point, dividing the iris is likely necessary. Dividing iris is the process of splitting a single plant into multiple plants, helping the plant to perform better.



The frequency of dividing will depend on plant growth. In general, Iris should be divided every three to five years to help rejuvenate them and increase flowering. Iris should ideally be divided from late July through early August, but can be divided from late July through August. During this period, iris are dormant and if divided will likely still bloom the following year. Iris divided in early spring or too soon after flowering will tend to see a reduction in flowers during the next bloom period.

Iris have a root system that consists of thick rhizomes (modified stems that grow just below the soil surface) and smaller feeder roots. Because iris are fairly shallow rooted, it is easiest to dig up the entire clump when dividing. Dig up the entire plant & shake off the excess soil to examine the roots.



Look for healthy sections of rhizomes that have a fan of leaves growing from the top side of the rhizome, and feeder roots extending below. Healthy rhizomes should be firm and at least the width of your thumb. With a sharp knife, or with your hands, break off sections of rhizomes that have the fan of leaves attached to them. Each of these sections is a viable plant that can be replanted in your garden. Some sections of rhizome may have two fans, and those are great to plant as well. These larger sections will bloom more than the smaller pieces, but will also need to

be divided sooner too. Sections of rhizomes without a fan of leaves attached can be discarded. Any pieces of rhizome that are soft and mushy, have holes (iris borer), or with an odor should also be discarded.

Next, trim the leaves of the plant to a length of about eight-inches tall. Cut the fan of leaves in a triangle shape, with each blade being cut at an angle to keep water from collecting in the thick, open leaves. This step will help prevent the plant from falling over while the roots become established.

Then prepare the soil for replanting. Remove any weeds and fertilize according to soil test recommendations. If a soil test has not been





completed, apply a balanced fertilizer (10-10-10 for example) at a rate of 1 pound per 100 square feet. Mix the fertilizer into the soil to a depth of at least six inches. Space plants 12 to 18 inches apart in a circle, using an odd number of plants, usually three to five plants. Direct the cut ends of the rhizomes to the interior of the circle, and the fans pointed out away from the circle so that plants have room to expand.

Plant your iris rhizomes shallow in the soil. Make sure the small feeder roots are in contact with the soil, and the rhizomes are only partially covered with soil. The top of the rhizome must be slightly exposed to sunlight when planted.

Do not mulch. Water newly planted rhizomes thoroughly, but do not over-water plants once established.

When dividing iris, it is important to replant irises early enough in the season to allow roots to establish before the first hard frost. It may take one growing season for single fans to build up strength and maximize the number of blooms.

Turf:

Summer Crabgrass Control In Kansas:

Crabgrass is a common summer weed in Kansas. It germinates in the spring from seed, grows rapidly all summer, and dies out with the first freeze of winter. There are two to three common species of crabgrass in Kansas, which vary slightly in size and appearance. Both have a prostrate growth habit and develop seedheads that form 3-5 finger like spikes (digitate). Crabgrass is most commonly found in areas of bare soils, lawns that are mowed too low, and in moist or poorly drained soils. New crabgrass plants continue to germinate all summer long from seed, as long as growing conditions remain favorable.

Crabgrass plants readily produce seeds, which lay dormant in the soil until growing conditions are met. In just a one foot by one foot square of crabgrass, these plants can produce over 10,000 seeds in one growing season, creating a bank of seeds in the soil for many years to come.



Although many people choose to control crabgrass in the spring using a weed preventer (pre-emergent herbicide), crabgrass can be present if pre-emergent products were not applied, applied too late, or lost their effectiveness before the end of the growing season. Regardless of the reason, there are still options available to control actively growing crabgrass this summer.

Hand pulling crabgrass is always an effective control, especially in the landscape and vegetable garden. Applying a two to four inch layer of mulch can also suppress future crabgrass growth.

There are also many cultural practices that homeowners can implement to reduce crabgrass in the lawn. Mowing at the proper mowing height, fertilizing at the appropriate times of year, and proper irrigation can all limit crabgrass growth and boost lawn health.



Crabgrass growing in the home lawn can also be removed using chemical control, but effectiveness will vary depending on the size of the crabgrass plant. Most post-emergent herbicides (products that kill established plants that are actively growing) will be most effective when crabgrass plants are very small or very large. Some of the stages in between are not as effectively controlled using post-emergent herbicides. Ideally, crabgrass killers should be applied before crabgrass plants develop five leaves. After this point, crabgrass plants begin to create side shoots off the base of the main shoot, called tillers. Once crabgrass begins to form tillers and spread horizontally, it becomes more difficult to control and may require multiple herbicide applications to be effective.

Many herbicides contain notes on the label about what number of tillers/leaves that each specific product will be effective on, so be sure to read the entire label carefully for those instructions when selecting an herbicide to control established crabgrass.

Products that contain the active ingredient quinclorac will be the most common formulation homeowners can purchase for crabgrass control in the lawn. These products will be most effective on crabgrass that has only one tiller, or after the crabgrass plant has established four or more tillers. In between these tiller stages, quinclorac is documented to be less effective. Commercial lawn care companies often also have access to a greater selection of active ingredients that can be effective against crabgrass than homeowners do.

If lawns have been treated with a crabgrass killer, the grass clippings should not be used for mulch. Grass clippings should be returned to the lawn or discarded. Especially in lawns treated with quinclorac, do not use clippings to mulch vegetable or flower gardens as they can harm desirable garden crops.

Often using a combination of pre- and post-emergent herbicides will be most effective in controlling crabgrass. Even if post-emergent herbicides are used to kill actively growing crabgrass, in most cases they will not prevent new crabgrass seeds from germinating after the initial plants are removed. This means that you may kill crabgrass plants with a June or July spray but still see crabgrass return in August or September as optimal growing conditions persist.

If all else fails, homeowners can live with crabgrass this summer, knowing that it will die this winter, and make plans to prevent crabgrass next spring by applying a pre-emergent product when the redbud trees bloom.



Trees & Shrubs:

Controlling Volunteer Trees:



Though trees are a vital part of our landscapes, there are situations where volunteer trees need to be controlled. Trees growing in the fenceline, in the flowerbeds, through other desired species, or from an old tree stump are all common examples of volunteer trees that may need to be removed.

If volunteer trees are a desirable tree species, and just need relocated, the ideal time to do so would be during the dormant season (late fall through late winter). This will be easiest if the tree is still small. Otherwise, to remove the tree a control measure is necessary.

While simply cutting off the tree back to ground level may be the obvious choice, most tree species will resprout after being cut. Siberian elm, hackberry, Osage orange (Hedgeapple), oak, ash, aspen, cottonwood, maple, sycamore, and willow trees will all frequently resprout. There are a few exceptions to this rule, however. For example, eastern red cedar is a very common species that will not resprout after cutting.

If the volunteer tree is a species that resprouts, the tree will either need to be dug out or treated with an herbicide. Herbicides can be applied to the leaves of the volunteer tree or to the cut stump once the vegetative growth has been cut back.

Products that contain the active ingredients triclopyr or glyphosate will be the herbicides that are most effective and commonly labeled for the home landscape. These active ingredients are found in many brush and stump killers, and are most often applied undiluted to the stump. Whatever product you select, make sure to read the label before use to make sure that a cut stump treatment is listed. Do NOT use products that contain Tordon, as this product is not labeled for landscape use and has the potential to escape the roots of the plant and damage surrounding trees & shrubs.

When applying herbicides to a stump, it is critical that the products are applied immediately after making the pruning cut. Apply the product within 30 to 90 seconds of making the stump treatment for best results, and within at least 3 to 5 minutes for effective control. If more time than this has passed, recut the stump before applying herbicides. The longer a cut stump remains open to the air, the more the wound begins to seal closed, and restricts the absorption of herbicides applied.

Herbicide treatments should be applied to the outer ring of wood in the cut stump. Most absorption will take place along the vascular cambium, or the place in the stump where the bark and wood meet. Applying herbicides to the center of large stumps is unnecessary, as products applied



here will not be effectively transported down to the roots for volunteer tree control. The liquid can be carefully poured on to the vascular cambium area, or a foam paint brush can be used to more carefully apply the product and avoid dripping on desirable plants.

Trees do not need to be actively growing to be controlled with cut stump treatments. Any time of year, when temperatures are above freezing, will be effective, however effectiveness will vary depending on the product and time of year applied. The greatest efficacy will likely occur during the fall months.

It is also important when controlling volunteer trees to identify whether the tree originates as a sucker from an existing tree, or if it is a seedling with its own root system. Sucker trees will share a root system with another tree in the landscape, often a desirable tree. While digging up or spraying an herbicide to sucker trees may be effective, this will damage or kill the other potentially desirable trees which share a root system. Using herbicides on suckers is rarely appropriate. Trees that commonly produce suckers include crabapple, tree of heaven, honeylocust, black locust, hackberry, western soapberry, cottonwood, aspen, poplar, willow, and boxelder. Roots can also graft underground among similar tree species, creating one shared root system.



Contributors:

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

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<http://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/info-center/newsletters/>*

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