Horticulture 2010 Newsletter
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UPCOMING EVENTS

Kansas Turfgrass Conference
December 7, 8 and 9, 2010
Kansas Expocentre, Topeka

This conference is an excellent way to learn about turf and landscape management, visit with old friends, network with new ones, place orders with and see all the latest and greatest equipment and supplies from local and national vendors. Sessions include Basic Turfgrass, Insect Management, Pesticide Applicator Core Hour and Weed Management, Managing Summer Stress, Trees, Flowers and Shrubs, Irrigation, Sports Turf, Water Management and more.

The conference has been approved for commercial recertification credit as follows:
   1 Core Hour
   3A - 5.5 hours
   3B - 9 hours

GCSAA education points and International Society of Arboriculture CEUs can also be earned by attending this conference.

To download a copy of the brochure and registration information, go to http://www.kansasturfgrassfoundation.org/Conference.html

Urban Trees: Tree Selection
December 2, 2010
El Dorado, Kan.
For more information, go to http://www.kansasforests.org/calendar/

Great Plains Growers Conference
The Great Plains Growers Conference, a conference for seasoned and beginning vegetable and fruit growers will be held January 5-8, 2011, at Missouri Western State University, St. Joseph, Mo.

This year two already great conferences will be combined into one – The Great Plains Vegetable
and Mid-America Fruit Growers conferences.

For more information go to http://www.greatplainsgrowers.org

FLOWERS

Fall Care of Peonies

Peony foliage can be cut back to the ground if it hasn’t been already. Foliage may be composted or discarded.

Peonies are fertilized twice a year; in the spring shortly before new growth appears and then again in the fall after the plants have been cut back. A total of 1.5 to 2 ounces of a 1-1-1 fertilizer such as a 10-10-10 or 13-13-13 per plant per application should be used. Therefore, a total of 3 to 4 ounces of fertilizer per year is used. If a soil test reveals adequate levels of phosphorus and potassium, use a high nitrogen fertilizer such as a 16-0-0. You may even use a lawn fertilizer such as a 29-5-4, 27-3-3 or something similar, but cut the rate in half.

Never apply fertilizer directly on the center of the peony as the buds (eyes) may be damaged. Rather, place the fertilizer in a band from 8 to 18 inches from the center of the plant. Water the fertilizer in so the plant can take it up.

Winter protection of herbaceous peonies is only necessary the first winter after planting to prevent alternate freezing and thawing from lifting plants out of the soil. A couple of inches of mulch should be sufficient. Any organic material that does not mat down will work (avoid using leaves) and should be applied after the ground freezes. Remove the covering before growth begins in the spring.

The less common tree peonies have woody stems like deciduous shrubs and should not be cut back to the ground or pruned in the fall. Collect the shed leaves and place in the compost pile this fall. Though tree peonies are hardy to Zone 4, they do benefit from a light mulching over winter. Also, it is recommended that tree peonies be fertilized during November to get the plants off to a good start next spring. It is best to take a soil test to see what nutrients are needed. If the soil needs phosphorus and potassium, use a complete fertilizer (such as 10-10-10, 9-9-6, etc.) at the rate of 2.5 pounds per 100 square feet. This would equal 1 rounded teaspoon per square foot. If phosphorus and potassium are not needed, blood meal makes an excellent fertilizer. It should be applied at the rate of 2 pounds per 100 square feet or 1 teaspoon per square foot. Turf fertilizers such as a 27-3-3 or 30-3-3 can also be used, but the rate would have to be cut to 1 pound per 100 square feet or 1 teaspoon per 2 square feet. (WU)
Winterizing Roses

Though most shrub roses are hardy in Kansas, other types of roses can be more tender. For example, the hybrid teas have certain species in their ancestry that originated in the warm climate of southern China. These roses need protection to reliably survive Kansas winters.

Mound soil or compost about 8 to 10 inches high around each plant. If using soil, bring it in from another part of the garden. Do not pull it from between plants because this can damage the rose roots or make them more susceptible to cold. This normally is finished by Thanksgiving. After the ground has frozen, add a 4-inch mulch of straw, leaves or hay for further protection. More soil may be spread on top of the mulch to keep it in place. Do not add the mulch before the ground freezes or mice may invade and feed on the roses over the winter. The purpose of these coverings is not only to moderate the cold, but also to prevent warm days during the winter or early spring from stimulating growth that is tender to returning cold weather.

Excessively tall canes should be pruned to a height of 36 inches and tied together to prevent them from being whipped by strong winter winds. Wind can damage the crown of the plant or loosen the surrounding soil. Next spring, remove coverings before new growth starts. Wait until after the ground thaws, or the tops may begin growing before the roots can provide water. (WU)

ORNAMENTALS

Pruning Shrubs

Recently, we have received a number of calls from gardeners wanting to cut back shrubs. Though light pruning and/or removal of dead wood is fine this time of year, severe pruning should be left until spring. Keep in mind that even light pruning of spring-blooming shrubs such as lilac and forsythia will reduce flowers for next year. We normally recommend that spring-bloomers be pruned after flowering.

Shrubs differ in how severely they can be cut back. Junipers do not break bud from within the plant and therefore should be trimmed lightly if you wish to keep the full shape. Overgrown junipers should be removed. On the other hand, there are certain shrubs that can be pruned back severely during the spring. Rejuvenation is the most severe type of pruning and may be used on multi-stem shrubs that have become too large with too many old branches to justify saving the younger canes. All stems are cut back to 3- to 5-inch
stubs. This works well for spirea, forsythia, pyracantha, ninebark, Russian almond, little leaf mock orange, shrub roses and flowering quince. Just remember that spring is the correct time to do this, not now. (WU)

**Water Landscape Plants Before Winter**

To protect perennial plants from winter damage, it is important that they go into winter with moist soil. It’s been a warm, dry fall in many areas of Kansas, so consider watering. Although all perennial plants will benefit from watering during a dry fall, it is especially important for evergreens because moisture is easily lost from the foliage and newly planted trees and shrubs due to limited root systems.

A good, deep watering with moisture reaching at least a foot down into the soil is much better than several light sprinklings that just wet the top portions of the soil. This will ensure that the majority of roots have access to water. The roots that actually absorb water are killed when the soil temperature reaches 28 degrees F. Those near the surface do not last long in our Kansas winters. We must rely on roots that are deeper, and provide moisture for them to absorb. Depth of watering can be checked with a metal rod or wooden dowel. Either instrument will easily penetrate moist soil but will stop when dry soil is reached. (WU)

**MISCELLANEOUS**

**Begin Rabbit Protection Now**

Rabbits may begin to nibble on newly planted trees and shrubs this time of year. Protect your investment now through this winter with at least 2-foot-tall cylinders of 1-inch-mesh, chicken wire or similar barrier. Other control methods include plastic tree wraps and liquid rabbit repellents sprayed on the plants. (WU)

**Contributors:**
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To view Upcoming Events: [http://tinyurl.com/fswqe](http://tinyurl.com/fswqe)

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