Video of the Week: Beautiful Flowers Start with Plants Adapted for Kansas

VEGETABLES

Protecting New Vegetable Transplants from the Wind

New transplants, even those hardened off in a cold frame, may need protection from strong winds when set out. Wooden shingles placed to block the wind used to be recommended but are now difficult to find. Try a plastic milk jug or a 2-liter soda bottle with both the bottom and top cut off. Push the jug or bottle into the soil far enough so it won’t blow away. In windy conditions, it may need to be stabilized with a wooden dowel or metal rod. (WU)

FRUIT

Peaches and Apricots

For the second year in a row many parts of Kansas will have a peach and apricot crop that wasn’t badly hurt by late frosts. To take advantage of this good fortune certain things should be done as the fruit matures to ensure a good harvest.

Control insects and diseases: Though it is too late to control peach leaf curl (see related article), it is possible to control scab and brown rot. Insects of concern are plum curculio, oriental fruit moth,
plant bugs, and stink bugs. Use Captan or Immunox to control the diseases, and malathion to control the insects. Spray every 10 to 14 days. Pay attention to the waiting period between the last spray and harvest. See the publication, “Fruit Pest Control for Home Gardens” at http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/library/hort2/c592.pdf for details including organic controls.

**Thin peaches:** Thin peaches to 1 every 4 inches to maximize fruit size and to decrease the load on the branches. Peaches are borne in clusters, so calculate how many a branch can support by dividing the length of the branch by 4. As long as there is an average of 4 inches of branch length per peach, it doesn’t matter whether the peaches are in clusters or not. Prop up branches if needed: Prop up branches if the fruit load is so heavy the tree may break apart. Use boards with a “V” cut in one end to support the branch. (WU)

**Be on the Lookout for Peach Leaf Curl and Plum Pocket**

Peach leaf curl is a fungus disease that causes developing peach leaves to become puckered and distorted and show a reddish-green hue. A similar disease called plum pocket may develop on American and sand hill plums. Plum pocket results in formation of distorted, light green, bladder-shaped fruit. Asian and European plums are not susceptible to the local strain of plum pocket. It is too late to control these diseases with fungicides this year.

Trees that are severely infected with peach leaf curl are likely to lose many leaves. If trees are healthy, new leaves will grow. Indicators of a healthy tree are large, deep green leaves and last year's growth being at least 18 to 24 inches long. If these tree vigor indicators are not present, especially if there was only 12 inches or less of growth last year, then a fertilizer application would be helpful. The fertilizer should be spread on the soil under the branch area. Apply 1 and 1/3 to 2 cups of a 13-13-13 fertilizer under the branch area. If a soil test indicates that only nitrogen is needed, use 1/3 to 1½ cups of nitrate of soda (16-0-0) instead of the 13-13-13. You may also substitute a high nitrogen fertilizer such as a 27-3-4, 30-5-4 or something similar for the 13-13-13, but use only half the amount used for nitrate of soda. The sooner fertilizer is applied, the more immediate benefit it will have in promoting new leaf growth. Both peach leaf curl and plum pocket can be controlled with a single fungicide application applied this fall after leaf drop or early next spring before bud swell. Effective fungicides include Bordeaux, liquid lime sulfur and chlorothalonil (Bravo, Daconil and others). Be sure to cover the entire tree including the bark and trunk. (WU)
ORNAMENTALS

Bark Shedding on Eastern Redbud

Trees naturally shed bark as they grow. The amount of bark shed varies significantly from one year to the next and is usually not noticeable. However, it seems that dry fall weather and cold winter temperatures contribute to heavier than normal bark shedding. Some trees, such as sycamore, London Planetree, silver maple, and eastern redbud shed bark in large patches or strips causing concern about the health of the tree. Fortunately, bark shedding in not harmful.

So far this year, bark shedding has been most noticeable on the trunks of older eastern redbuds. As this species loses bark, an orangish-brown inner bark is revealed. Sycamore and London Planetree normally show a bright green color on the branches when the bark first falls off but soon return to normal. Maple reveals an orange color after shedding but it, too, soon returns to its natural color. Again, there is nothing wrong with the tree as long as the shedding bark simply reveals underlying bark rather than bare wood. (WU)

PESTS

Cabbage Worms

This is the time of year we normally start seeing damage from cabbage worms. The imported cabbage worm is usually the first cabbage worm species to appear and is a fuzzy, elongated green worm. Larvae come from eggs laid by the white butterfly often seen flitting around the plants. Early control is essential to reduce injury. BT (Bacillus thuringiensis) and spinosad (Borer, Bagworm, Leafminer and Tent Caterpillar Spray; Captain Jack's Dead Bug Brew) are effective organic products that are labeled for this pest. BT can be found in Dipel, Thuricide and other similar materials. Direct sunlight deactivates BT quickly so it is helpful to spray late in the day or on a cloudy day. Conventional insecticides such as carbaryl (Sevin), malathion and methoxychlor are also effective but will kill natural enemies of these pests as will rotenone, an organic product. Be sure to hit the underside of leaves where insects feed. Note that hitting the underside of leaves is easier when using a dust applied with a duster than when using a liquid spray. (WU)
Learning to identify poison ivy is vital if you wish to avoid the rash that accompanies exposure. Unfortunately, poison ivy can make identification difficult because it occurs in three forms: an erect woody shrub, a groundcover that creeps along the ground, and a woody vine that will climb trees. When poison ivy climbs, it forms numerous aerial roots that give the vine the appearance of a fuzzy rope. The leaves of poison ivy also vary. Though the compound leaf always has three leaflets, the leaf margins may be toothed, incised, lobed or smooth. The size of the leaves also can vary, although usually the middle leaflet is larger than the other two. Also, the middle leaflet is the only one with a long stalk; the other two are closely attached to the petiole (leaf stem). The number of leaves gives rise to the saying: "Leaves of three, let it be!" Poison ivy is often confused with Virginia creeper. Virginia creeper, however, has five leaflets rather than three.

There are three methods commonly used to eradicate poison ivy. These include pulling or grubbing out the plants by hand, cutting off the vine, and then treating the regrowth, and spraying the plants directly. The method used depends somewhat on the plant's growth form. If the plant is growing as a groundcover, direct spray or grubbing the plant out is often used. If grubbing, wear gloves and a long-sleeved shirt. The soil must be moist for grubbing to work well. Wash the clothes and yourself immediately after you finish. It might also be a good idea to rinse the washing machine. If the plant is in the shrub form, direct spray is the most common control method. If the plant is a woody vine that has climbed a tree, the preferred method is to cut the plant off at the base and treat the sprouts after they emerge. Some triclopyr herbicides also have instructions on treating a freshly cut stump directly.

Herbicides that can be used include glyphosate (Roundup, Killzall Weed and Grass Killer, Nutgrass, Poison Ivy and Vine Killer) or triclopyr (Brush-B-Gon Poison Ivy Killer, Brush Killer Stump Killer). Poison ivy is tough. Repeat applications may be necessary. (WU)

**Contributors:** Ward Upham

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