Horticulture 2011 Newsletter  
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Video of the Week:  Protecting Roses for the Winter

UPCOMING EVENTS

Kansas Turfgrass Conference  
December 6, 7 and 8, 2011  
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, Disease, Insect, Weed Management, Zoysiagrass and Bermudagrass Symposium, Managing Summer Stress, Trees/Flowers/Shrubs, Sports Turf Management, and more.

The conference has been approved for commercial pesticide recertification credit as follows:  
1 Core Hour  
3A – 7 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 conference brochure, or to register online, go to http://www.kansasturfgrassfoundation.com/annual-ktf-conference.html

ORNAMENTALS

Pruning Shrubs

Recently, we have received a number of calls from gardeners wanting to cut back shrubs. Though light pruning and removal of dead wood are 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)

FLOWERS

Fall Care of Peonies

Cut peony foliage back to the ground if it hasn’t been already. Compost or discard foliage.

Fertilize peonies 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. This amounts to 3 to 4 ounces of
fertilizer per year. 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 and should
be applied after the ground freezes. Avoid using leaves. 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. Apply 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 also can be used but at the rate of 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. Mounding is normally 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)

**MISCELLANEOUS**

**Draining Hoses and Irrigation Lines**

Hoses and shallow irrigation lines may be damaged over the winter if water is not drained. Lawn irrigation systems usually have shallow lines but are normally built to be self-draining. If there is a main shut-off valve for the system, close it and then run through the zones to make sure any pressure has a chance to bleed off. Drain hoses by stretching them out and coiling them for storage. Water will drain as you pull the hose toward you for coiling. Store in a protected place. UV light can make hoses brittle over time. (WU)
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)

Winterizing Garden Hand Tools

Hoes, shovels, and other common garden tools often have wooden handles that can deteriorate over time. Storing tools in a protected location can slow that process, but normal use will still expose the tools to the elements. The end of the season is a good time to clean up and protect the tools so they will last for many years. Weathering can raise the grain of wood on handles, resulting in splinters. A light sanding can smooth any raised areas. Follow that with a light application of wood preservative, linseed oil, or polyurethane to protect the wood. Wipe off any excess after a few minutes as oil-based products can attract dirt.

Remove soil from metal surfaces. Use sandpaper or steel wool to remove any rust that may have formed. Now would also be a good time to sharpen dull edges. A light coating of oil will help protect metal through the winter. (WU)

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To view Upcoming Events: http://tinyurl.com/fswqe

Horticulture 2011 E-mail Subscription

For questions or further information contact: wupham@ksu.edu

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