Horticulture 2013 Newsletter  
No. 40  October 8, 2013

Video of the Week:  How to Plant a Tree

VEGETABLES

Peppers from the Garden

Peppers are able to be stored fresh much longer than tomatoes. They can usually keep in a crisper drawer of a refrigerator for several weeks if kept moist but not wet. For longer storage, freezing works well. Though mushy when thawed, the flavor still comes through in cooked foods. Try dicing them into small pieces and then freezing on a cookie sheet. The frozen pieces can then be poured into a plastic bag for later use. Measuring is much easier as the pieces are not frozen together in a clump. This method works equally well for hot peppers. (Ward Upham)

Fall Planting of Asparagus & Rhubarb

We sometimes receive questions as to whether asparagus or rhubarb can be moved in the fall. Though these crops are traditionally transplanted in the spring (mid-March to mid-April), a fall move can be successful. Wait until the top has been browned by frost and then cut back to the ground. Prepare the soil and fertilize as you would in the spring. See http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/bookstore/pubs/mf319.pdf for more detail on asparagus and http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/bookstore/pubs/ep99.pdf for more information on rhubarb.

Water well after planting to insure good root/soil contact. Mulching would be helpful on the rhubarb to prevent the plant from heaving out of the soil during the winter but asparagus requires no such treatment as it is planted much deeper. (Ward Upham)
Rotation of Vegetable Crops

Rotating vegetable crops is a standard way of helping prevent disease from being carried over from one year to the next. Rotation means that crops are moved to different areas of the garden each year. Planting the same crop, or a related crop, in the same area each year can lead to a build-up of disease. Also, different crops vary in the depth and density of the root system as well as extract different levels of nutrients. As a rule, cool-season crops such as cabbage, peas, lettuce and onions have relatively sparse, shallow root systems and warm-season crops such as tomatoes, peppers and melons have deeper, better developed root systems. Therefore, it can be helpful to rotate warm-season and cool-season crops.

As mentioned earlier, it is also a good idea to avoid planting closely related crops in the same area as diseases may be shared among them. For example, tomatoes, potatoes, peppers and eggplant are closely related. Also, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage and brussels sprouts share many characteristics in common. Therefore, do not plant cabbage where broccoli was the previous year or tomatoes where the peppers were.

So, why is this important to bring this up in the fall? Now is the time to make a sketch of your garden so that the layout is not forgotten when it is time to plant next year. (Ward Upham)

TURFGRASS

Frost on Lawns

If you have ever walked across a frosted lawn that isn't dormant, you may have noticed your footprints showing up later in the day. Though this is unsightly, it does not kill the turf. Grass blades are damaged but the crown is not. Actively growing turf will often recover after two to four mowings. Damage that occurs this late in the fall will continue to show damage until it is masked by the rest of the lawn turning brown due to cold weather. It is believed that the damage is caused by ice crystals killing plant cells when they are forced into the leaf by the weight of a wheel or foot. Remember to avoid damage by staying off of frosted turf. (Ward Upham)
ORNAMENTALS

Twig Girdlers

People often wonder what clips the tips of branches off of trees. Though both squirrels and twig girdlers can cause this type of damage, at this time of year, twig girdlers are often the culprits. It is easy to tell the difference between twig girdler damage and squirrel damage. Girdler damage looks like a beaver has fed on the branch, leaving it smooth and cone shaped. Squirrel damage is more tattered and cut at an angle.

Though twig girdlers can attack a wide variety of tree species, elm is often preferred. Late in the growing season, the female deposits eggs in small scars it has chewed through the bark and then chews a continuous notch around the twig, girdling it. The notch is cut below the site of egg deposition apparently because the larva is unable to complete development in the presence of large amounts of sap. Girdled twigs often remain on the tree until sufficient wind dislodges them.

Large infestations can result in a high percentage of twigs being girdled. Though this may reduce the vigor and overall appearance of the tree, the overall effect on the tree’s health is not severe. However, the twigs are unsightly and do not fall all at once so clean-up is a drawn out process.

Chemical control is impractical. Fallen twigs can be gathered and disposed of either in the fall or in the spring as this will destroy the larvae inside the twigs. Often, natural mortality is high due to excessive drying of fallen twigs or too many larvae per twig. (Ward

MISCELLANEOUS

Fall is a Good Time for Soil Testing

Though we often think of soil testing as a spring chore, fall can actually be a better time. Soil-testing laboratories are often very busy during the spring resulting in a longer turnaround from submission to recommendations. Also, soils in the spring are often waterlogged, making taking samples difficult. If your soil test suggests more organic matter, fall is a much better season because materials are more available than in the spring, and fresher materials can be used without harming young tender spring-planted plants.

Begin by taking a representative sample from several locations in the garden or lawn. Each
sample should contain soil from the surface to about 6 to 8 inches deep. This is most easily done with a soil sampler. Many K-State Research and Extension offices have such samplers available for checkout. If you don’t have a sampler, use a shovel to dig straight down into the soil. Then shave a small layer off the back of the hole for your sample. Mix the samples together in a clean plastic container and select about 1 to 1.5 cups of soil. This can be placed in a plastic container such as a resealable plastic bag.

Take the soil to your county extension office to have tests done for a small charge at the K-State soil-testing laboratory. A soil test determines fertility problems, not other conditions that may exist such as poor drainage, poor soil structure, soil borne diseases or insects, chemical contaminants or damage, or shade with root competition from other plants. All of these conditions may reduce plant performance but cannot be evaluated by a soil test. (Ward Upham)

**Contributors:** Ward Upham, Extension Associate

---

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

The web version includes color images that illustrate subjects discussed. To subscribe to this newsletter electronically, send an e-mail message to cdipman@ksu.edu or wupham@ksu.edu listing your e-mail address in the message.

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

Brand names appearing in this publication are for product identification purposes only. No endorsement is intended, nor is criticism implied of similar products not mentioned.

---

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service