

Horticulture 2019 Newsletter

No. 41 October 15, 2019

1712 Claflin, 2021 Throckmorton Plant Science Cntr.
Manhattan, KS 66506 (785) 532-6173

Video of the Week: [Storing Tender Bulbs for the Winter](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Kansas Turf Conference in conjunction with KNLA
December 4, 5 & 6
Hilton Garden Inn, Manhattan



Mark the date to attend the Kansas Turfgrass Conference in conjunction with KNLA on December 4, 5 & 6 in Manhattan

The conference is an excellent way to learn about turf, nursery and landscape management, visit with old friends, network with new ones, and see all the latest equipment and supplies from local and national vendors.

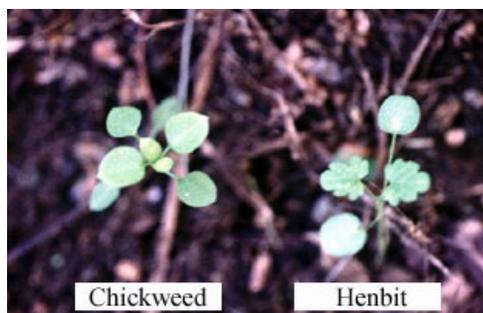
The conference has been approved for Commercial pesticide recertification hours:
1 Core hour 3A - 7 hrs 3B - 7 hrs

International Society of Arboriculture CEUs and GCSAA education points will also be available by attending the conference.

Download a copy of the program, get exhibitor information, or register online
<http://www.kansasturfgrassfoundation.com/annual-ktf-conference.html>

TURFGRASS

Control Broadleaf Weeds in Lawns in Late October - Early November



Late October to early November is the most effective time to control broadleaf weeds in lawns. Dandelions usually produce a flush of new plants in late September, and the winter annual weeds henbit and chickweed should have germinated in October. These young plants are small and easily controlled with herbicides such as 2,4-D or combination products (Trimec, Weed-B-Gon, Weed-Out) that contain 2,4-D, MCPP and Dicamba. Even established dandelions are more easily controlled now than in the spring because they are actively moving materials from the top portion of the plant to the roots in

the fall. Herbicides will translocate to the roots as well and will kill the plant from the roots up.

Choose a day that is 50 degrees or higher. The better the weed is growing, the more weed killer will be moved from the leaves to the roots. Cold temperatures will slow this process but these products will still work at lower temperatures.

Weed Free Zone (also sold under the name of Speed Zone) contains the three active ingredients mentioned above, plus carfentrazone. It will give a quicker response than the other products mentioned especially as temperatures move below 50 degrees. (Ward Upham)

Why Late Lawn Seedings Often Fail



We normally recommend that Kentucky bluegrass and tall fescue be seeded in September but no later than October 15. Though plantings later than October 15 can be successful, the odds of success diminish as time passes.

The problem with late plantings is not that the seed will not come up or that young grass plants are sensitive to cold. Most often, the problem is with rooting. Unless the young grass plants have a fairly extensive root system, the freezing and thawing that takes place during winter heaves plants out of the ground, and they dry out and die.

Regardless of when planted, be sure the new lawn is kept watered through the fall. More mature lawns will need less frequent watering but all should go into the winter with moist soil. (Ward Upham)

Tucking Your Lawnmower in for the Winter



If you are done mowing for the year, be sure to service your mower before putting it away. Make sure you drain the gas tank of gasoline-powered engines or use a gasoline stabilizer. Untreated gasoline can become thick and gummy. A few drops of oil squirted inside the spark plug hole (after you remove the spark plug) will help lubricate the cylinder. While you have the spark plug removed, replace it with a new one. If your equipment has a battery, clean the battery terminals, which usually corrode during the season. A wire-bristle brush is a good tool for doing this. The battery can then be removed or connected to a battery maintainer that will keep it charged over winter. If you remove the battery, be sure to store it in a protected location for the winter (a cool basement works best). Now is also an excellent time to sharpen mower blades so they'll be ready next spring.

Sharpening rotary mower blades is fairly straightforward. The following steps will guide you through this process:

- * Check the blade for major damage. If you can't fix it, it likely will need to be replaced.
- * Remove grass and debris from the blade with a moist cloth. Dry before beginning to sharpen

the cutting edge.

- * Remove nicks from the cutting edge, using a grinding wheel or hand-file.
- * If using a grinding wheel, match the existing edge angle to the wheel. If hand-filing, file at the same angle as the existing edge.
- * Grind or file until the edge is 1/32 inch, about the size of a period. Sharpening to a razor edge may result in the edge folding over during use resulting in a poor cut.
- * Particularly with a grinding wheel, avoid overheating the blade as this may warp it.
- * Clean the blade with solvent or oil, much like if you were cleaning a gun, for optimum winter storage. Avoid using water because it will promote rust.

Following these tips can help you better prepare your mower for winter storage and also save you some steps this coming spring. (Ward Upham)

VEGETABLES

Hardiness of Cool-Season Vegetables



Cool-season vegetables vary in cold tolerance, with some able to take colder temperatures than others. Semi-hardy crops can take a light frost but are damaged by temperatures in the mid- to upper-20s. Examples include beets, Chinese cabbage, collards, Irish potatoes, Bibb lettuce, mustard, radishes, spinach, Swiss chard, and leaf lettuce. Covering these plants when cold weather threatens can help extend the harvest season.

Plants termed “hardy” can take lower temperatures but are damaged when the temperature drops to the low 20s. These include cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, carrots, turnips, and kale.

Certain root crops can essentially be stored outside even after the leaves have been damaged or killed by frost. Beets, carrots, potatoes and turnips can be mulched and harvested as needed until the soil starts to freeze in late November to December.

Growing vegetables in Kansas can be a challenge, but we have an extremely long gardening season. We can harvest from early April (asparagus) to early December. Winter is a good time to plan and prepare for next year’s crops. (Ward Upham)

Keeping Your Pumpkin Longer

If you buy your pumpkins early, there are some tricks to make them last. Make sure the pumpkin wasn't harvested too early; before the rind developed a hard, waxy layer to keep it from drying out and shriveling. Test the pumpkin



with your thumbnail. If it penetrates the fruit easily, it was harvested too early. Pumpkins also keep better in cooler weather. Even mature pumpkins may benefit from a light application of a spray wax such as that used for cars.

If you carve your pumpkins consider that the seeds can be saved and roasted. Scoop out the seeds, rinse them well to remove any strands of tissue that have remained and spread them out so they can dry. Once dry, they can be roasted on a cookie sheet for 10 to 15 minutes at 350 degrees. Roast larger seeds for the longer amount of time.

If you prefer salted seeds, soak the seeds in a brine. Make the brine by combining 2 tablespoons of salt for every 2 cups of water. Add the seeds to the brine and bring to a boil and simmer for 10 minutes. Drain, toss with a tablespoon of olive oil and spread on a cookie sheet. Bake at 400 degrees for 20 to 25 minutes. Check the seeds during the last 5 minutes and remove when done.

Note that carving reduces the longevity of pumpkins with carved pumpkins doing well to last a week. (Ward Upham)

FLOWERS

Winter Storage of Summer Bulbs



As winter approaches, we need to start thinking about storage of the bulbs that will not survive Kansas winters. The bulbs of gladiolus, caladium, dahlia, tuberous begonia, calla lily, and canna lily need to be dug and stored so they can be planted next year. Actually, the storage organ of the above plants is not a true bulb. Canna and calla lilies are rhizomes, caladium, and tuberous begonias are tubers, gladiolus is a corm, and dahlia is a tuberous rooted plant.

All of these plants should be dug after frost has at least partially browned the foliage. Then, allow them to dry for about a week in a shady, well-ventilated site such as a garage or tool shed. Freezing temperatures should be avoided. Remove any excess soil and pack them in peat moss, vermiculite, or perlite. Make sure the bulbs don't touch so that if one decays, the rot doesn't spread. Dusting them with fungicide before storage will help prevent them from rotting.

Caladium should be stored between 50 and 60 degrees F. The other bulbs mentioned should be stored as near 40 degrees F as possible. Finding a good spot to store the bulbs may be difficult. Some people place them against a basement wall farthest from the furnace and insulate them so the wall keeps them cool. (Ward Upham)

ORNAMENTALS

Sharp Drop in Temperature may be a Cause for Concern for Trees



Western Kansas experienced an extremely sharp drop in temperature during the latter part of last week. Temperatures in some areas of northwest Kansas were near 80 on Wednesday and dropped to near 20 or lower Friday morning. Unfortunately, trees were not hardened off before this happened. In other words, they were not ready for these cold temperatures.

Some trees will very likely be affected by this sharp drop in temperature. The first sign of damage is marcescence in which trees that normally drop their leaves in the fall, don't. Leaves don't drop because they didn't have enough time to develop an abscission layer at the base of each leaf that allowed it to fall. Though marcescence itself does not harm the tree, it is a clue that further damage may have occurred. Notice I said "may." Trees that exhibit marcescence may be perfectly fine. Also, portions of the state that did not suffer this extreme drop in temperature should be good.

It is possible that trees that show evidence of marcescence, may also have suffered damage to the living tissue under the bark. The sharp drop in temperature may damage at least a portion the phloem and the cambium. Remember the phloem carries food made in the leaves to all parts of the plants including the roots. The cambium produces new phloem. If the phloem and cambium are killed, the cambium cannot produce new, living phloem, and, therefore, the roots don't receive the food needed to survive and eventually starve to death.

Trees so affected will not die immediately. First of all, a healthy root system has stored energy reserves that it can use to keep the tree alive. When those reserves are depleted, the tree will die very quickly. Usually this occurs during the summer following the year the damage occurred.

However, there is more to the story. Doesn't a tree also need water? Since the living portion of the trunk was killed, wouldn't this stop water flow? Actually, it would not. Xylem is the structure in the tree that carries water from the soil throughout the plant. The reason the tree can still distribute water to the top portion of the tree is due to how a tree grows and, specifically, how xylem works. Even in perfectly healthy trees, most of the xylem is dead. This dead xylem forms hollow tubes that carry the vast majority of water and nutrients throughout the plant. Though there are living xylem cells, the contents of those cells make them inefficient in moving water. Therefore, the functional portion of the xylem wasn't hurt by the freeze because it was already dead. Since this xylem system still works and provides water for the tree, the tree can live for quite a period of time until the roots starve.

Remember, as stated before, trees with marcescence may be fine. Even if there was also damage to tree tissues, it all depends on how much of the living tissue under the bark was killed. If only a small portion is killed then the tree may recover. If the entire circumference is killed, the tree is done for and there isn't anything you can do to save it. Any portion of the trunk where the bark comes off and the underlying layer is brown, is dead.

So, is there anything we can do now to help the trees? Since we don't know the extent of the damage, if any, we need to insure there is no further stress. Primarily, that means to water the tree as needed. Keep the soil moist but not waterlogged until freezing temperatures are here to stay. (Ward Upham)

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

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