Video of the Week: When to Fertilize Your Lawn

UPCOMING EVENTS

The NE Kansas High Tunnel Bus Tour - June 5 (K-State Olathe Research & Extension Cntr.)

Get a firsthand introduction to the diversity of high tunnel production systems we have in our region. First we will tour the more than 20,000 ft² of tunnel production at our research center. Then, we’ll jump on the bus to visit nearby farms and learn more about how local growers use high tunnels in their operations. Lunch provided. To register, visit https://www.eventbrite.com/e/high-tunnel-bus-tour-tickets-44651678372

Kansas Turfgrass Field Day - August 2 (Manhattan)

The field day program is designed for all segments of the turf industry - lawn care, athletic fields, golf courses, and grounds maintenance. Included on the program are research presentations, problem diagnosis, commercial exhibitors, and equipment displays. There will be time to see current research, talk to the experts and get answers to your questions.

The Commercial Vegetable Research Field Day - August 27 (K-State Olathe Research & Extension Cntr.)

Bring your walking shoes for this event as we will take a comprehensive tour of all our specialty crop research. Projects include tomato grafting, organic sweet potato, high tunnels, postharvest quality, variety trials, cover cropping techniques, and the effects of light on high tunnel crops. Stay for a cookout in the shade hosted by the staff and students.

VEGETABLES

Mulching Tomatoes

Soils are warm enough now that tomatoes can benefit from mulching. Tomatoes prefer even levels of soil moisture and mulches provide such
by preventing excessive evaporation. Other benefits of mulching include weed suppression, moderating soil temperatures and preventing the formation of a hard crust on the soil. Crusted soils restrict air movement into and out of the soil and slow the water infiltration rate.

Hay and straw mulches are very popular for tomatoes but may contain weed or volunteer grain seeds. Grass clippings can also be used but should be applied as a relatively thin layer – only 2 to 3 inches thick. Clippings should also be dry as wet clipping can mold and become so hard that water can’t pass through. Also, do not use clippings from lawns that have been treated with a weed killer until some time has passed. With most types of weed killers, clippings from the fourth mowing after treatment may be used. If the lawn was treated with a product containing quinclorac (Drive), the clippings should not be used as mulch. If the weed killer used has a crabgrass killer, it likely contains quinclorac. (Ward Upham)

Onions Developing

This is the time of year that onions grow and develop rapidly. Regular watering (if needed) and a light fertilization are helpful to maximize growth. If your soil tends to be alkaline, use ammonium sulfate (21-0-0) at the rate of ½ cup per 10 feet of row. Or you can use a lawn fertilizer such as a 29-5-5, 27-3-3 or anything similar but only use 1/3 cup per 10 feet of row. Make sure the lawn fertilizer does not have a weed preventer or weed killer included. Sprinkle the fertilizer 2 to 3 inches alongside the row and water in. Do not fertilize after the onions start to bulb.

Onions develop so that as much as 2/3 of the bulb remains out of the soil. There is normal and there is no need to cover the bulb with soil. (Ward Upham)

FLOWERS

Spring-Flowering Bulb Foliage can be Removed

It is important to leave spring-flowering bulb foliage in place until it “ripens” or becomes brown. The energy produced by the leaves after flowering is transferred to the bulb so that it can flower the following year. The ripening process should be near completion now for tulips, daffodils and various other spring-flowering bulbs. Use clippers, scissors or even a mower to remove dead foliage. Also, try to map out where the bulbs are planted as there will be no foliage to make the location next fall when it is time to fertilize. (Ward Upham)
Sidedressing Chart Available

Gregg Eyestone, Horticulture Agent from Riley County, has put together a nice chart that covers sidedressing nitrogen on annual flowers, certain perennial flowers, vegetables and various small fruit. Sidedressing (also called topdressing) is applying nitrogen fertilizer as plants are growing to give them an extra boost. Done correctly, sidedressing can improve vegetable, fruit and flower production. Gregg lists the crop, the amount of fertilizer needed, and suggested time of application. Rates are given for ammonium sulfate, urea and blood meal. You may find the chart at http://tinyurl.com/hxtgres (Ward Upham)

Useful Resource: K-State Extension Wildlife Management Web Site

Most people enjoy the wide variety of wildlife found in Kansas until that wildlife becomes a nuisance or damages property. Charlie Lee, K-State Wildlife Management Specialist, has put together a web site on wildlife management at http://www.wildlife.k-state.edu/. Species covered include everything from bats to woodrats. Each species page also incorporates quick links for more in-depth information. One of our most common pest species, moles, includes videos on tracking an active tunnel and setting a mole trap.

This site is an excellent resource for the various options of dealing with our interactions with wildlife in a safe and effective manner. (Ward Upham)

Watering Houseplants While on Vacation

We are approaching the time of year when many people take vacation. In the rush to get everything done before leaving, don't forget your houseplants will probably need watering while you are gone. The best alternative is to have someone water them for you. However, if this is not possible, there are alternatives.

1. Well-watered plants can be placed inside a plastic bag. Prop up the bag by using wooden dowels or something similar to keep the plastic off the leaves. Make sure the enclosed plants will not receive full sun as heat buildup may cook them. Bright, indirect light is best. Plants should keep for about a week with this method.
2. This method requires an old dish drying rack, a bathtub in a bathroom with some natural light and some shoelaces. Place the drying rack upside down in the tub and add several inches of water. Push one end of a shoelace through a drainage hole on the bottom of a pot and into the potting soil of your houseplant. The other end of the shoelace dangles into the water. What you have made is a wick system that will replace water in the pot as the plant uses it. Plants can last a couple of weeks if you have enough natural light.

3. There are numerous commercial products that can be used to automatically water houseplants in your absence. The advantage of these products is that the houseplant does not normally need to be moved. All require a reservoir from which water is either siphoned or pumped to individual houseplants. Houseplants should last as long as the water holds out. (Ward Upham)

To view Upcoming Events: [http://hnr.k-state.edu/events/index.html](http://hnr.k-state.edu/events/index.html)

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.

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Knowledge for Life

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