

Horticulture 2024 Newsletter No. 19 May 13, 2024

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

Video of the Week: [Stake and Weave Tomatoes](#)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Do you know a teacher who is a gardener?

If so, have them email Cynthia to be featured in an upcoming newsletter (cdom@ksu.edu).

Riley County Master Gardener 35th Annual Garden Tour



**35TH ANNUAL
GARDEN TOUR**
Saturday, June 22, 2024
8:30 AM - 1 PM

GARDENS ON THE TOUR

Kitra Cooper	302 S. Manhattan Ave.
Tim Lindemuth	500 Denison Ave.
Barbara & Ron Meitler.....	1736 Westbank Way
Susan & Kim Nelson	3001 Pinewood Circle
Doris Proudfoot	1739 Fairchild Ave.
K-State Gardens	1500 Denison Ave.
Manhattan Community Gardens	703 S 9th St.
.....	1435 Collins Lane

Tickets not required. Suggested \$10 donation. Proceeds benefit Kansas State University Gardens. For more information call 785-537-6350.

K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider. K-State Research and Extension is committed to making its services, activities and programs accessible to all participants. If you have special requirements due to physical, vision or hearing disability or a dietary restriction contact Greg Geyer at 785-537-6350. <https://www.k-state.edu/master-gardener/>

K-STATE
Research and Extension

Master Gardener
Riley County

2024 Kansas Turf and Ornamentals Field Day

August 1, 2024, at Rocky Ford Turfgrass Research Center in Manhattan, KS.

<https://www.k-state.edu/turf/events/2024TurfFieldDayProgram.pdf>

GARDEN CALENDAR

Get those gardens growing!

[May Garden Calendar](#)

VEGETABLES

Supporting Tomatoes



Tomatoes need support to remain upright. If left to grow on the ground there is less air flow and greater risk of disease. Support keeps the fruit off the ground which helps reduce contamination from contact with soil. Is there a right or wrong way to support your tomato plants? Maybe...

Traditional, store-bought cages can be effective especially for small, container varieties of tomatoes. Though these cages sometimes come in fun colors, they tend to be more expensive than building your own. The support they provide is minimal and often insufficient for most tomato varieties.

You can build your own tomato cage using concrete reinforcing mesh. With a roll 150 feet long and 5 feet tall you can create multiple tomato cages and trellises to support climbing plants. The openings between the wires are large enough to fit your hand through for harvesting and allow even large slicing tomatoes to slide through. Cut the wire at the desired length and create a cylinder that will wrap around the tomato plant. If you cut the wire at a length of six feet, the diameter of the cage will be almost two feet. Wrap the cut wires around the other end of the panel to secure the cylindrical shape. To keep the cage in place you will need at least one or two wooden stakes. Hammer them into the soil several inches and attach the cage to them using wire or garden tape.

Another support method is called the “basketweave” or “stake and weave” which is a trellising system. Plants should be grown in a row with a t-post in the ground between every few plants. Install a t-post at the start and end of the row as well. When plants are about one-foot tall tie a strand of twine to the t-post at one end of the row. Walk the



length of the row holding the twine and wrapping it around each t-post as you pass. At the opposite end of the row, wrap the twine around the t-post and then return to the start while again wrapping the twine around each post. As



you come upon plants, they should be carefully placed between the strings for support. When you reach the starting point, cut the twine and secure it to the t-post. As the plants grow add twine higher up on the posts in this same pattern. Twine should be added every 8-12 inches or at least before the plants begin to droop.

Staggering Sweet Corn Planting

Sweet corn is a warm-season crop. Though there's nothing like the taste of fresh sweet corn, it is not recommended for gardeners with limited space. Mature plants take up a lot of space but only provide one to two ears of corn. Staggering plantings prolongs the harvest. When each crop reaches $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inches tall you can seed the next planting. Plants should be spaced 8-12 inches apart in rows 3 feet apart. Crowded plants will be spindly and weak. Sweet corn requires wind for pollination. Planting in blocks with at least four rows per block instead of a single row promotes better pollination. With improper pollination there may be ears with missing kernels or gaps between the kernels.



FRUIT

Peach Leaf Curl and Plum Pocket



One of the most common diseases of peach trees in Kansas is peach leaf curl. Infected new leaves develop reddish areas and eventually drop. Plants use their energy to send out new leaves which inhibits fruit production and overall tree growth. Plum pocket is a disease which distorts the fruit and prevents seed growth leaving the plums hollowed and enlarged.

Applying fungicide in the fall after leaves have dropped can be an effective control against these diseases. But for now, maintaining healthy trees is the best way to prevent problems with your fruit trees.

A healthy peach/plum tree will have large, deep green leaves with 18-24 inches of new growth from last year. If you see less than 12-inches of growth you can apply a balanced fertilizer (such as 13-13-13). Add 1-1/3 to 2 cups on the soil beneath the tree canopy. This should be done as soon as possible to promote leaf growth. Thinning the fruit can also help direct the tree's energy to growth.

PESTS

Cabbage Worms



Description: Velvet-green larvae are 1-1/4 inches long at maturity. The chrysalis is light green, tan or yellowish and about one-inch long. The adult is a white butterfly with black spots on the wings. Spherical eggs are yellow to cream in color.

Life Cycle: Adult butterflies emerge in spring and begin laying eggs on the underside of leaves of host plants. The resulting caterpillars reach maturity

within 10-14 days and feed on hosts of broccoli and cabbage typically. Chrysalis attach to the food source with silken threads. There can be multiple generations of cabbage worms each year.

Damage: No damage is caused by the adults but the larvae feed on their host plant and can defoliate entire plants sometimes preventing the formation of heads. Boring into the heads can also cause them to be inedible due to their presence along with the fecal pellets.

Control: Monitor plants for signs of cabbage worms regularly. White butterflies near cole crops is an indicator of cabbage worms. Larvae are camouflaged against plant leaves so look for irregular-shaped holes and dark green fecal pellets on the plant or ground nearby.

Prevent cabbage worms by removing debris after the growing season to reduce overwintering habitats. Use row covers to prevent butterflies from laying eggs. Choose cultivars that mature faster to shorten the season. Remove larvae by hand. Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) is effective on young caterpillars as are Spinosad, neem and pyrethrum. Always follow label instructions and practice safe application. A spreader sticker will increase efficacy due to the slick leaves of the host plants.

Rabbits in the Garden

Gardens are flourishing with the warmer weather which provides a buffet for wildlife such as rabbits. Capable of producing 3-4 litters each year, rabbits can become a serious pest.

Though many shrubs that are two-three feet tall can tolerate feeding from rabbits, annuals and young herbaceous plants can be decimated overnight.



Exclusion is usually the most effective tactic for preventing damage caused by rabbits. Creating a fence around your plants with a wire mesh such as chicken wire or using a floating row cover can provide protection. Fences should either be buried several inches below ground or secured to the ground with stakes to prevent rabbits from pulling them up and squeezing under the fence. Fences should be at least 2-3 feet tall. Young trees and shrubs may need

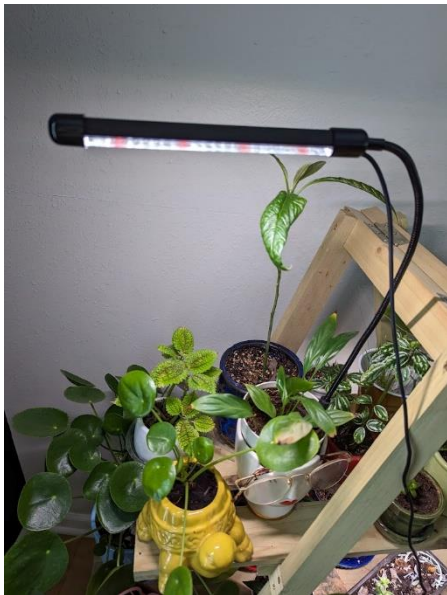
protection for several years before they are mature enough to withstand feeding from rabbits.

Though repellants exist, they are often not as effective as gardeners hope and are typically not labeled for vegetable crops. They also must be reapplied each time it rains.

Motion sensor sprinklers and noise makers can be used to scare wildlife out of the landscape but this strategy also has limited efficacy. Not only are they limited in their range, rabbits can become accustomed to them and no longer frightened.

MISCELLANEOUS

Moving Houseplants Outside for Summer



As we continue the trend towards consistently warmer weather houseplants can be moved outdoors. When the nighttime temperature stays above 60 degrees F regularly it is safe to relocate houseplants to a protected area outdoors. Some plants will be fine once the temperature stays above 50 degrees F overnight. This includes protection from wind and sun. A covered porch close to the house is a good spot where plants may receive indirect light.

Houseplants benefit from being moved outdoors and having natural light and humidity during the summer months. This gives plants time to recover from the lower light conditions indoors. It can also make caring for plants easier when it comes time to water. Many of us grow houseplants in more decorative containers. Some of my indoor containers do not have drainage

holes. Be mindful of this if your plants will be exposed to rainfall. You may consider transplanting these plants into outdoor containers or keeping them inside.

Beware when outdoors, houseplants will likely need more frequent watering. Do not leave saucers under plants when they're outdoors. This will attract mosquitos as water collects and may cause soil oversaturation. You may notice more rapid growth due to improved growing conditions making it necessary to prune plants back and even

transplant into a larger container. Save those clippings and experiment with propagating additional plants!

COMMUNITY GARDEN CORNER



Community gardens are intended to serve the community. So, what do you do when your garden experiences theft or vandalism? This is not an issue for all community gardens nor is it something we want to believe is a possibility. However, it is a reality for some and responding appropriately is important. Here are some recommendations from the American Community Garden Association for preventing and dealing with theft and vandalism in the garden.

Read more: KSRE Community Garden Corner: [Preventing and Facing Theft/Vandalism](#)

QUESTION of the WEEK



Mulch Timing

Does it matter when I put mulch down around my tomato plants?

Great question! We know mulch is a temperature regulator. Typically, we think of it as a good thing as it keeps the soil from getting too hot during summer. However, that also means that if applied early in the spring it is going to slow down the soil from warming up when our warm season veggies really need it to. It also may retain too much moisture due to slower evaporation rates. It is best to wait until the soil has warmed up, usually late-May to early-June, before adding mulch.



Contributors:

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For questions or further information, contact: cdom@ksu.edu OR cdipman@ksu.edu
This newsletter is also available on the World Wide Web at:
<http://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/info-center/newsletters/index.html>

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