

Horticulture 2008 Newsletter No. 38 September 24, 2008

UPCOMING EVENTS

Kansas Turfgrass Conference

November 18, 19 & 20

Kansas Expocentre, Topeka

To download a copy of the program and registration information, go to

<http://www.ksuturf.com/Conference.html>

TURFGRASS

Lawn Seeding Deadline Nears



September is the best month to reseed cool-season lawns such as tall fescue and Kentucky bluegrass. However, you can get by with an early to mid-October planting for tall fescue. October 15 is generally considered the last day for safely planting or overseeding a tall fescue lawn in the fall. If you do attempt a late seeding, take special care not to allow plants to dry out.

Anything that slows growth will make it less likely that plants will mature enough to survive the winter. Seedings done after the cut-off date can be successful, but the success rate goes down the later the planting date. Late plantings that fail are usually not killed by cold temperatures but rather desiccation. The freezing and thawing of soils heave poorly rooted grass plants out of the ground, which then dry and die. Keeping plants watered will help maximize root growth before freezing weather arrives. (WU)

VEGETABLES

Harvesting Sweet Potatoes



Sweet potatoes should be harvested no later than the first fall freeze because cold temperatures can damage the sensitive roots. However, you may want to harvest earlier if you prefer a smaller sweet potato. Test dig a hill to see if they are the size you want.

Sweet potatoes should be cured after being dug. The digging process often damages the tender skin and curing helps these small wounds heal over. Place the roots in a warm, humid location for 5 to

10 days immediately after digging. A location with a temperature around 85 to 90 degrees is ideal. A space heater can be used to heat a small room or other area. Raise the humidity by placing moist towels in the room. The curing process not only heals wounds but also helps convert starches to sugars. This process improves the texture and flavor of the roots.

Sweet potatoes should be stored above 55 degrees. Storage at temperatures below that injures the roots, shortens storage life and gives them an off flavor. (WU)

Garlic Planting Time



October is a good time to plant garlic (*Allium sativum*) if you want large quality cloves next summer. Apply 3 pounds of 10-10-10 fertilizer per 100 square feet and mix into the soil before planting. Plant individual cloves point up and spaced 3 inches apart and 1 to 2 inches deep. The larger the clove planted, the larger the bulb at harvest. Water in well and mulch with straw to conserve soil warmth and encourage good establishment. Harvest will not occur until next summer when most of the foliage has browned.

Elephant garlic (*Allium ampeloprasum*) should also be planted now. It is a plant with a milder garlic flavor and is actually a closer relative to the leek than to true garlic. (WU)

FRUIT

Fruit Planting Preparation



If you plan to develop or add to your fruit garden next year, now is a good time to begin preparing the planting site. Grass areas should be tilled so grass does not compete with the fruit plants for soil moisture and nutrients. Have the soil analyzed for plant nutrients. Your local

K-State Research and Extension agents have information to guide you in taking the soil sample. From that sample, the agent can provide recommendations on what and how much fertilizer

to add to correct nutrient deficiencies. Organic materials such as compost, grass clippings, leaves, hay, straw or dried manure, can be tilled into the soil to help improve its condition. Time and weather conditions generally are more suitable in the fall than in the late winter and spring for preparing soil. If fruit plants can be set by early April, they will have developed a stronger root system to support plant growth than they would if planted later. (WU)

Contributors:

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

[Horticulture 2008 E-mail Subscription](#)

For questions or further information contact: [Hort WebMeister](#).

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