

Horticulture 2011 Newsletter No. 1 January 5, 2011

Video of the Week: ["Indoor Palms"](#)

Horticulture 2010 Indexed

All of the articles published in Horticulture 2010 are now indexed in two different ways. The first is based on date and lists articles in order from January through December. The second is indexed by subject. Indexing by date is easy if using a spreadsheet. However, indexing by subject is a very time consuming undertaking. One of our Johnson County Extension Master Gardeners, Carole Brandt, has completed this task for us the last two years. Many thanks to Carole in making these past articles much easier to find. You can access the lists at the following locations. (WU)

Date Index: <http://tinyurl.com/3yxp7d>

Subject Index: <http://tinyurl.com/2vmkstk>

Upcoming Events



Great Plains Growers Conference

January 6 - 8, 2011

<http://www.greatplainsgrowers.org/>

56th Annual Shade Tree Conference

January 12-14, 2011

Ramada - Downtown, Topeka, KS

<http://www.kansasarborist.com/shadetree.aspx>

Ornamentals



Pine Wilt in Western Kansas

In the past few weeks pine wilt has been confirmed in several counties in western Kansas. These sites are farther west than the “established” zone of pine wilt activity. Pine wilt has been in the eastern half of Kansas for decades, and now the “front line” communities include Beloit, Hays, Great Bend, Pratt, and Medicine Lodge. But, we have detected it even farther west this fall. We hope these findings are isolated occurrences and that appropriate sanitation will prevent further spread.

In Kansas, we most commonly find pine wilt in Scots and Austrian pine. It has been picked up in mugo pine as well. Symptoms include a gray-green “off” color to the needles, then the needles turn brown/tan. The needles stay on the tree—they don’t fall off. Often the tree dies

within a few weeks or months.

Where in western Kansas has pine wilt been found? Pine wilt has been detected in the following counties: Hodgeman, Meade, Barber, Rooks, Seward, Finney, Rush, Smith, Pawnee, Phillips

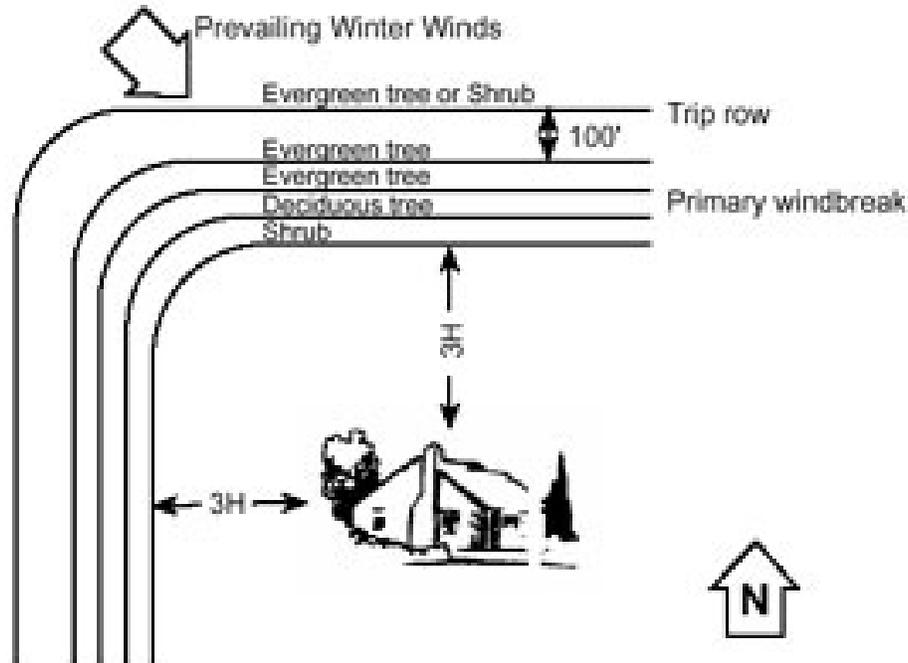
So far, it appears that these are isolated finds, with one or few trees affected. At one site, infested firewood from eastern Kansas may have been the trigger. Several K-State Research & Extension county agents, the Kansas Department of Agriculture, and the Kansas Forest Service are working with landowners to ensure the prompt destruction of the trees.

The tree needs to be removed as soon as possible. The wood should be chipped or burned immediately. Do not save the wood for firewood for later. Too often, people forget about it, and the logs end up sitting there well into spring and summer, allowing the beetles to emerge and spread the disease.

Some communities such as Hays and Beloit have developed active plans for managing pine wilt. Those of you farther west might get in touch with your community leaders to suggest putting plans in place.

Thanks to those of you who have already been assisting with these efforts! (MK)

Conservation Trees from the Kansas Forest Service



The Kansas Forest Service offers low-cost tree and shrub seedlings for use in conservation plantings. Plants are one to two years old and sizes vary from 5 to 18 inches, depending on species. Orders are accepted from now through the first full week in May each year, but order early to insure getting the items you want. Orders are shipped from the second week of March through May 5.

Approved uses for these plants include windbreaks, wood lots, riparian plantings, wildlife habitat and Christmas trees. They may not be used for landscape (ornamental) plantings or grown for resale. Though a single species can be purchased, three special bundles are also available including a songbird bundle, wildlife bundle and wildlife mast bundle. All items are sold in units. Each unit consists of a number of plants; usually 30 or 50. For example, a unit of Eastern red cedar has 50 trees per unit. For details and an order form, go to: <http://www.kansasforests.org/conservation/index.shtml>

Order forms are also available from local K-State Research and Extension offices. (WU)

MISCELLANEOUS

Starting Plants from Seed



January is often a cold and dreary month for many gardeners. However, starting vegetables and flowers from seed can make this a much more interesting time of year. Following are the steps needed to be successful in seed starting.

Purchase Recommended, Quality Seed: Start by taking a look at our recommended varieties at <http://www.hfrr.ksu.edu/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabid=731>. These plants have proven themselves across the state of Kansas and is a good place to start when deciding what to plant. However, also talk to your neighbors, friends and garden center about what has worked well for them. Obtain your seeds from a reputable source including garden centers and seed catalogs. If choosing seeds from a business that does not specialize in plants, pay special attention to the

package date to make sure the seed was packaged for the current year. Though most seed remains viable for about 3 years, germination decreases as seed ages. See the accompanying article on using old garden seed for more detailed information.

Determine the Date to Seed: There are two pieces of information that needs to be known in order to determine the date to seed: the target date for transplanting outside and the number of weeks needed to grow the transplant. The target date for transplanting the cool-season crops such as broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower and onions is the end of March to the beginning of April. Warm-season crops like tomatoes, peppers and most annual flowers are usually planted about May 10. There is a companion article in this newsletter listing common plants and the number of weeks needed to grow a transplant.

Sowing Seed: Do not use garden soil to germinate seed as it is too heavy and may contain disease organisms. Use a media made especially for seed germination.

Keep Seed Moist: Seed must be kept moist in order to germinate. Water often enough that the media never dries. Using a clear plastic wrap can over the top of the container until the new plants emerge can reduce the amount of watering needed.

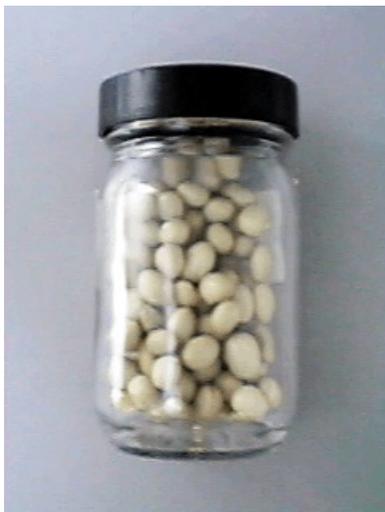
Light: Most plants will germinate in either darkness or light but some require darkness (Centurea, Larkspur, Pansy, Portulaca, Phlox and Verbena) and others require light (Ageratum, Browallia, Begonia, Coleus, Geranium, Impatiens, lettuce, Nicotiana, Petunia and Snapdragon). All plants require adequate amounts of light once emergence occurs. South facing windows may not provide adequate

amounts and so fluorescent fixtures are often used. Suspend the lights 2 to 4 inches above the top of the plants and leave them on for 16 hours each day.

Temperature: The temperature best for germination is often higher than what we may find in our homes especially since evaporating moisture can cool the germination media. Moving the container closer to the ceiling (top of a refrigerator) can help but a heating mat is best for consistent germination. A companion article lists common plants and their optimum germination temperature. After plants have germinated, they can be grown at a cooler temperature (65 to 70 degrees during the day and 55 to 60 degrees at night). This will help prevent tall, spindly transplants.

Hardening Transplants: Plants grown inside will often undergo transplant shock if not hardened off. Plants are hardened off by moving them outside and exposing them to sun and wind before transplanting occurs. Start about two weeks before transplanting and gradually expose the plants to outside conditions. Increase the number of hours and degree of exposure over the two-week period. (WU)

Using Old Garden Seed



Seed catalogs seem to come earlier every year, and many gardeners already have a collection of them. Garden seed can be expensive, and you may want to consider using seed from previous years. Seed stores best if kept in a cold, dark, dry location. We normally consider seed will stay viable for about 3 years under these conditions though there are exceptions. For example, members of the carrot family (carrots, parsnips and parsley) are short-lived and are usually good for only 1 to 2 years. If you are unsure of viability and have plenty of seed, there is an easy method of determining how good your seed is. Place 10 seeds on a paper towel moistened with warm water and cover with a second moistened towel. Roll up the towels and place inside a plastic bag with enough holes for air exchange but not so many that the towels dry quickly. Place the bag in a warm place such as the top of a refrigerator. Remoisten towels with warm water as needed. After the first week, check for germination. Remove sprouted seed and check again after another week. Add these numbers together to determine the percent germination. (WU)

Vegetables and Flowers Seeding Table

The following information was adapted from the North Carolina State Publication titled "Starting Plants from Seeds," HIL-8703



<u>Plant</u>	<u>Time to Seed Before Germination</u>	
	<u>Planting Date*</u>	<u>Temperature**</u>
Ageratum	8	70
Alyssum	8	70
Aster	6	70
Balsam	6	70
Begonia	12 or more	70
Broccoli	8	70
Browallia	12 or more	70
Cabbage	8	70
Cauliflower	8	70
Celosia	8	70
Centuria	6	65
Coleus	8	65
Cosmos	4 or less	70
Cucumber	4 or less	85
Dahlia	8	70
Dianthus	10	70
Eggplant	8	70
Geranium	12 or more	70
Impatiens	10	70
Larkspur	12 or more	70
Lettuce	8	70
Marigold	6	70
Muskmelon	4 or less	85
Nicotiana	8	70
Pansy	12 or more	65
Pepper	8	80
Petunia	10	70
Phlox	8	65
Portulaca	10	70
Snapdragon	10	65
Squash	4 or less	85
Stock	10	70
Tomato	6	80
Verbena	10	65
Vinca	12 or more	70
Watermelon	4 or less	85

* Number of weeks before transplanting to seed.

** Temperature in degree F

Contributors:

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

[Horticulture 2011 E-mail Subscription](#)

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

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“Knowledge for Life”

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service