

Horticulture 2011 Newsletter

No. 5 February 2, 2011

Video of the Week: [Pothos and Philodendron](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

2011 Spring Grounds Maintenance Workshops

We are doing it again. Touring the state, bringing you timely-research-based information you can use to manage your turf, trees, flowers, and ornamentals. We are doing 6 full-day workshops throughout KS. Each workshop is packed full of presentations and data from several research and extension specialists. You can read more about it by going to the web at www.KSUTurf.com or directly at <http://ksuturf.com/GroundsWorkshop.html>

You will hear from the researchers who are studying the turf, trees, flowers and ornamentals in KS and meet other horticulture professionals from your area (which many times, those contacts can also be a source of information and help when needed). Recertification credits for KS pesticide applicators will be available. (The credits will vary by location. Check www.KSUTurf.com for information about each location.)

Feb 9 in Salina (3A - 4 hours; 3B - 3 hours)

Feb 23 in Newton (3A - 3 hours; 3B - 3 hours)

Feb 28 in Emporia

Mar 4 in Olathe

Mar 10 in Lawrence

FRUIT

Time for Peach Leaf Curl Control

If you have ever seen emerging peach leaves that are puckered, swollen, distorted and reddish-green color you have seen peach leaf curl. Uncontrolled, this disease can severely weaken trees because of untimely



leaf drop when leaves unfurl in the spring. Fortunately, peach leaf curl is not that difficult to control if the spray is applied early enough. By the time you see symptoms, it is much too late. As a matter of fact, fungicides are ineffective if applied after buds begin to swell. Recent cold temperatures should keep trees in tight bud long enough to find a window for application. Don't spray when temperatures will fall below freezing before the spray dries.

Peach leaf curl can be controlled by a single fungicide application either in the fall after leaf drop or in the spring before bud swell. There are several fungicides labeled for this disease including Bordeaux, liquid lime sulfur, and chlorothalonil (Ortho Garden Disease Control, Fertilome Broad Spectrum Fungicide, GardenTech Fungicide Disease Control, Gordon's Multipurpose Fungicide, and Daconil). Thoroughly cover the entire tree during application. Note that it is much easier to achieve good spray coverage if the tree is pruned before spraying. (WU)

Some Fruit Trees Need Pollinators



Fruit and nut trees must be pollinated before fruit will develop. Nut trees are pollinated by the wind, but bees pollinate fruit trees. If you are planning a fruit planting, be sure to check to see if the cultivars (varieties) you are buying require a second cultivar as a source of pollen. It is important to understand that the different source of pollen is from a different cultivar, not a second plant or tree of the same cultivar. For example, Jonathan apple cannot be pollinated by another Jonathan, but rather another

cultivar such as Golden Delicious. Cultivars of apples, sweet cherries, pears, Japanese plums, blueberries and elderberries generally need a second cultivar for a pollen source. There are some exceptions such as Golden Delicious apple and Stella sweet cherry that are self-pollinating, and one tree is sufficient. Apricots, tart or pie cherry, European plum, peach, nectarine, blackberry, raspberry, currant, gooseberry, grape and strawberry plants are all self pollinating, and only one tree or plant is adequate for pollination and fruit development. If you have only one fruit tree that requires a pollinator, you can fool Mother Nature by using a bouquet of blossoms from another cultivar of the same species. Place the bouquet in a container of water, and hang it on the sunny side of the tree that needs to be pollinated. The bees will move from the flowers in the bouquet to the flowers in the tree and pollinate them. The trees must be blooming at the same time, and the bouquet should be replaced every two or three days to keep the flowers fresh and the pollen viable. (WU)

Dormant Oil Sprays for Fruit Trees

There are a number of dormant sprays used on fruit control various diseases and insects, but a dormant oil spray is designed to control scale insects. If you have a problem with scale, now is the time to start looking for an opportunity to spray. Normally spray should be



applied by March 1, especially with peaches and nectarines. Apples are tougher, and application may be delayed up to the green tip stage. Temperatures need to be at least 40 degrees so spray has a chance to dry before freezing. If the spray does freeze before it dries, plant injury can occur. Applying the spray during the morning will help insure that it dries properly. Thorough coverage of limbs, branches and twigs is vital for good control. Note that it is much easier to achieve good spray coverage if the tree is pruned before spraying. (WU)

PESTS

Check Plants for Scale Insects



The dormant season is a good time to check woody plants for scale insect infestations. This time of year, deciduous plants do not have leaves, so scale are more easily seen. If an infestation is detected, make plans to apply a dormant oil for control by March 1. Scale insects are easily overlooked because they are small and immobile most of their lives, and they do not resemble most other insects. Many of them resemble small shells that are oval or circular, but some have more unusual shapes like oyster shells. Coloring varies, but can include white, tan and brown. Plants that should be inspected for scales include apples, pears,

other fruit trees, bush fruits, lilac, crabapple, oak, ash, elm, lilac, maple, linden, arborvitae, juniper, pine, spruce and yew. Manhattan euonymus is especially noted for having scale problems. Plants are not harmed if only a few scales are present. But scale population can increase dramatically during the growing season. Heavy scale infestations can damage fruit crops, destroy branches and kill entire plants. (WU)

ORNAMENTALS



Prairie Sentinel™ Hackberry

Prairie Sentinel™ Hackberry was first recognized by members of the Kansas Forest Service. Its growth habit is strikingly columnar. The original plant is approximately 40 ft tall and only 8 ft wide. This selection will rival columnar English oak or Zelkova for a vertical accent in the landscape. The plant is otherwise typical of the species with excellent tolerance to urban conditions and a yellow fall color. Yes, the cultivar will get nipple gall, but it is not detrimental to the overall appearance of the tree.

This cultivar cannot be propagated by stem cuttings. This hackberry, like other cultivars of hackberry, is budded to seedling hackberry understock. Hackberry is notoriously difficult to clonally propagate, even by the best growers. Bare root liners can be planted and grow well under traditional nursery production practices.

Liners are being sold now to nurseries but this tree will not be retailed until 2012 to 2013. (JG)

MISCELLANEOUS

Avoiding Spindly Transplants



Gardeners often find it difficult to grow their own vegetable or flower transplants and frequently end up with spindly, weak plants that do not do well when placed outside. The two most common causes of spindly plants are low light and high temperatures after plants have germinated.

Unfortunately, these are the conditions commonly found on one of the most popular places to start seed — a windowsill. A windowsill doesn't provide enough light, and temperatures are hard to control. In order to understand what is needed to grow transplants, the process must be broken down into three distinct phases.

Germination: Germination requires warm temperatures, and usually the seed does not require light (lettuce is an exception). Therefore, place seeded containers in a warm place even if there isn't much light. For example, some people choose the top of a refrigerator. A heating pad is even better because most seeds germinate best at a constant temperature of between 70 and 75 degrees. This can vary by species with some requiring higher temperatures and others lower. Therefore, a heating mat with a thermostat is helpful. Also remember that this temperature should be that of the media, not the air. Media temperature can be 5 to 10 degrees cooler than air temperature due to evaporation, which causes cooling. Covering containers with plastic can reduce evaporation (and temperature drop), and consequently, watering frequency. Check containers often and move germinated seed to a location with adequate light.

Growth: Light and temperature must be controlled during this stage to produce strong, stocky seedlings. Temperature should be lower than that used for germination, with 60 to 70 degrees preferred. Light must also be adequate for good growth. The easiest way for most people to provide what is needed is to use florescent lights. A standard two-bulb florescent fixture works well. It must be adjustable so bulbs can be positioned 2 to 4 inches above the top of the plants. Incandescent bulbs do not work well because they produce too much heat to be placed as close to the plants as needed. Also, the common florescent bulb produces the wavelengths of light needed. A grow light will not produce more or better growth.

Hardening Off: Plants grown indoors need some time to acclimate to outside conditions of wind and

full sun. It usually takes about a week to harden off a plant. Reducing watering and temperature is key to toughen up transplants. If possible, move transplants outside for a portion of each day. Start by placing them in a shady, protected location and gradually move them into a more exposed, sunny location as the week progresses. (WU)

Use a Planting Calendar



If you start vegetable plants indoors, it is often helpful to list seeding dates on a calendar so that plants are ready for transplanting at the proper time. This is done by choosing your transplant date and backing up the number of weeks necessary to grow your own transplants. For example, cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower are usually transplanted in late March to early April. It takes 8 weeks from seeding to transplant size. Therefore, these plants should be seeded in early February. Information on how many weeks it takes to grow transplants is available in our

January 5 newsletter at <http://www.hfrr.ksu.edu/doc3040.ashx> . Below are some common vegetables grown for transplants and a recommended for seeding. Dates are Saturdays as this is when many homeowners have the most free time. The dates are not set in stone and a week earlier or later will not ruin the plants. Also, you may want to seed a week or two earlier if you are in southern Kansas and possibly a week later if you are in northern Kansas. Keep notes on how well the transplants did so you can tweak the planting schedule. Your conditions may result in plants that need a bit more or a bit less time. (WU)

<u>Crop</u>	<u>Seeding Date</u>	<u>Transplant Date</u>
Cabbage, Broccoli & Cauliflower	February 5	April 2
Lettuce (if you grow transplants)	February 5	April 2
Peppers		March 19 May 14
Tomatoes		March 26 May 7



Leaching Houseplants

Everyone knows that someone stranded in the ocean should not drink the salt water. The salt content of that water will make a bad situation worse. What many people don't realize is that this same principle can harm plants.

Fertilizers are salts. They must be salts in order for the plant roots to take them up. However, salt levels can build up over time and eventually may harm plant roots leading to scorched leaves and unhealthy plants. Though this can happen under field conditions, especially in low rainfall areas, it is particularly critical with houseplants.

Houseplants have a certain soil volume that doesn't change until a plant is repotted. Thus, salt build-up can be a crucial concern especially if plants are fertilized heavily. Leaching an overabundance of salts can be an important practice to insure the health of our houseplants.

Leaching is not a complicated or difficult process. It consists of adding enough water to wash out excess salts. How much water is enough? Add the amount of water that would equal twice the volume of the pot. This, of course, would need to be done outside or in a bathtub or sink. Water must be added slowly so that it doesn't overflow the rim of the pot.

If salt has formed a crust on the surface of the soil, remove it but don't take more than 1/4 inch of the underlying media. This may also be a good time to repot the plant. (WU)

Birdwatching and Bird Feeding Information



Chuck Otte, Ag and Natural Resources agent in Geary County, has published a number of fact sheets on bird feeding and birdwatching. Chuck is well known as a birdwatcher and serves as vice president of the Kansas Ornithological Society. He is also the webmaster for KSIRDS.ORG and the newly launched <http://birdinginkansas.com/>. You can find his fact sheets in our publications list under "Wildlife" at <http://www.hfr.ksu.edu/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabid=1013>. There is a total of eight publications with three

each on feeding birds and birdwatching, one on landscaping for birds and one specifically on hummingbirds. (WU)

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