



Horticulture 2011 Newsletter No. 47 November 23, 2011

Video of the Week: [Adding Organic Matter Improves Soil](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Friends of the KSU Gardens Annual Poinsettia Sale

Friday, December 2 – 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Wednesday, December 7 - 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

KSU Gardens Quinlan Visitor's Center (1500 Denison, Manhattan)

6 ½-inch pots – \$10 each or 6 for \$50

10-inch centerpieces – \$15 each

Dozens of colors and varieties grown by KSU students

Kansas Turfgrass Conference – December 6, 7 and 8, 2011

Kansas Expo Centre, Topeka

<http://www.kansasturfgrassfoundation.com/annual-ktf-conference.html>

Great Plains Growers Conference – January 5, 6 and 7, 2012

St. Joseph, MO

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

Kansas Arborists Association Shade Tree Conference - January 11–13, 2012

Ramada – Downtown Topeka, KS

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

RetailWorks - February 17, 2012

Capitol Plaza Hotel, Topeka, KS

TURFGRASS

Dormant Seeding of Turfgrass



The best time to seed cool-season grasses such as tall fescue and Kentucky bluegrass is September because the turf has more time to mature before spring crabgrass germination and the heat stress of summer. Dormant seeding of turfgrass is sometimes used to help fill in bare spots of lawns that weren't overseeded in the fall. Dormant overseeding is done during the winter (December – February) when it is much too cold for germination.

As with any seeding program, good seed-soil contact is vital. Several methods can be used. One method is to seed when there has been a light snowfall of up to an inch. This is shallow enough that bare spots can still be seen. Spread seed by hand on areas that need thickening up. As the snow melts, it brings the seed into good contact with the soil where it will germinate in the spring.

Another method is dependent on the surface of the soil being moist followed by some freezing weather. As moist soil freezes and thaws, small pockets are formed on the wet, bare soil that are perfect for catching and holding seed. As the soil dries, the pockets collapse and cover the seed. A third method involves core aerating, verticutting or hand raking and broadcasting seed immediately after. Of course, the soil must be dry enough and unfrozen for this to be practical.

With any of the above methods, seed germinates in the spring as early as possible. There will be limitations on what herbicides can be used for weed control. Tupersan (siduron) can be used as a crabgrass preventer on new seedings even before they have come up. Also dithiopyr, found in Hi-Yield Turf and Ornamental Weed and Grass Stopper, can be used on tall fescue, Kentucky bluegrass, and perennial ryegrass two weeks after germination. Dithiopyr is longer lasting and more effective than siduron. Other preemergence herbicides require that the turf be well established before application. (WU)

VEGETABLES



Garden Soil Preparation — It's Not Too Late

Autumn is an excellent time to add organic materials and till garden soils. Winter can still be a good time to take care of this chore as long as the soil isn't frozen. It is far wiser to till now than to wait until spring when cold, wet conditions can limit your ability to work soils easily. Working soil when it is wet destroys soil structure and results in

hard clods that are very slow to break down. On the other hand, dry soil may need to be watered so it can be more easily tilled. Be sure to wait several days after watering to let soil moisture levels moderate. You want the soil moist, not wet or dry, when tilling.

There is a limit to how much organic material such as leaves can be added in one application. Normally, a layer 2 inches deep is adequate with 5 to 6 inches being the maximum that can be added at one time. Shredding the material before application encourages faster and more complete decomposition due to increased surface area. Remember, soil preparation is an important key to a successful garden. (WU)

MISCELLANEOUS

Houseplants and Indoor Pollution



Researchers at the University of Georgia tested a number of common houseplants for their ability to remove organic volatiles from indoor environments. The indoor pollutants included benzene, toluene, octane, trichloroethylene (TCE), and alphaselinene. Houseplants were rated as superior, intermediate, or poor to reflect their ability to remove all volatiles. None of the plants appeared to have been damaged by the volatiles.

Superior Removal Efficiency

Hemigraphis alternata: Red Ivy

Hedera helix: English Ivy

Tradescantia pallida: Wandering Jew

Hoya carnosa: Porcelain Flower

Intermediate Removal Efficiency

Ficus benjamina: Weeping fig

Polyscias fruticosa: Ming aralia

Fittonia argyroneura: Silver Nerve Plant

Sansevieria trifasciata: Mother-in-Law's Tongue

Gusmania sp.: Type of Bromeliad

Anthurium andraeanum: Flamingo Flower

Schefflera elegantissima: False aralia

Poor Removal Efficiency

Peperomia clusiifolia: Peperomia

Chlorophytum comosum: Spider plant

Howea belmoreana: Sentry palm

Spathiphyllum wallisii: Peace Lily

Schefflera arboricola: Hawaiian Elf Schefflera

Codiaeum variegatum: Croton

Calathea roseopicta: Peacock Plant
Aspidistra elatior: Cast Iron Plant
Maranta leuconeura: Prayer Plant
Dracaena fragrans: Corn Plant
Ficus elastica: India Rubber Plant
Dieffenbachia seguine: Dumbcane
Philodendron scandens: Philodendron
Syngonium podophyllum: Nephytis, Arrowhead Vine
Epipremnum aureum: Pothos
Pelargonium graveolens: Rose Geranium (WU)

Monitor Indoor Plant Temperatures



Now would be a good time to check the location of foliage houseplants to be sure the plants don't get too cold this fall or winter. Plants next to windows or in entryways near outside doors are at the greatest risk. Plants sensitive to cold temperatures include Chinese evergreen (*Algaonema*), flamingo flower (*Anthurium*), croton (*Codiaeum*), false aralia (*Dizygotheca*), and ming and balfour aralia (*Polyscias*). Monitor and maintain temperatures above 65 degrees F for the false aralia and above 60 degrees for the rest of the list. Many other

indoor plants prefer temperatures above 50 degrees. If needed, move plants away from the windows or door entrances to reduce cold temperature exposure. It may be necessary to move some plants from windowsills before shades or drapes are pulled, especially in the evening.
(WU)

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

[Horticulture 2011 E-mail Subscription](#)

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