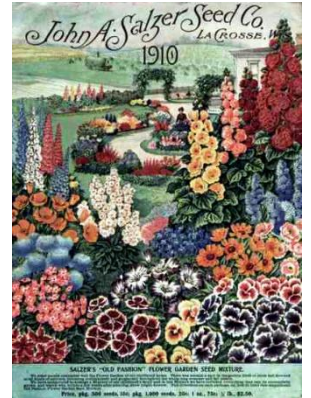


The Grapevine

Those Darn Gardening Catalog

Spring is just around the corner and if you are a plant lover like myself the warmer temperatures forecasted for next week already have us dreaming of vegetables from the garden and flowers blooming in our yard. The arrival of plant and seed catalogs in the mail seems to be encouraging these thoughts with the color pictures of tomatoes and dahlias on their front cover. Even though there was still ice on the ground this morning, now is the time to be planning your garden for the coming year, especially if you order seeds from one of those newly arrived catalogs. As I look through my new catalogs I'm going to be dreaming of the summer gardening season.

As I thumb through my first catalog I love to look at the trees and shrubs looking for that perfect flowering or shade tree for my yard. Often the catalogs we receive are sent out nationwide and they offer plants that won't survive overwinter in our area. Double check the USDA Hardiness zone number to make sure your plant will survive in our area. Butler County is divided into two different hardiness zones, 6a for the North East corner and Zone 6b for the rest of the county. As I plan my landscaping in the backyard I will be paying close attention to the hardiness zones to make sure I pick the right plant for the right place. Along with hardiness zones, keep an eye on the frost dates in your area. Some catalogs advertise "earliest blooming" which means your plant could lose its blooms or fruit to frost.



Growing up I loved the fresh peaches and cherries that we picked in our "orchard" every year. Some years the frost prevented us from having many peaches but we always had cherries. As you flip through the fruit section of your catalog remember to check if you will need a second tree to ensure pollination. Apples, sweet cherries, plums and pears all need a second variety to ensure pollination. Make sure you choose varieties that bloom during the same time frame, otherwise you might not get any apples.

As spring arrives, gardeners and plant lovers alike prepare for the green growing season. A little preparation before the growing season arrives can make a big difference in how your growing season goes. The catalogs are great places to purchase seeds for your garden, however I recommend visiting your local nursery or garden center and visiting with them about which trees or shrubs are reliably hardy in your area. They have years of experience and can give a great recommendation of a plant to fill your need that will be there for years to come.

Upcoming Events

- *January 5, 2022 at Noon: Vegetable Varieties for Bountiful Harvests*
Have you ever been overwhelmed by the choices in seed catalogs? Rebecca McMahon, Sedgwick County Horticulture Extension Agent, will give you the tools you need to make educated decisions about which vegetable varieties to try in your garden. Learn the differences between heirlooms and hybrids, decipher plant descriptions, and determine which varieties will provide a more bountiful harvest. Register at: https://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/info-center/k-state-garden-hour-webinar-series/k_state_garden_hour.html
- *January 13th at 6 pm: Garden Gossip- Seed Starting & Houseplant Propagation*
Do you struggle to start seeds at home or transition them outside in the spring? Have you always wanted to start new houseplants but have had issues getting them to grow? Join us for the first Garden Gossip workshop on Seed Starting and Houseplant Propagation. Participants will receive Houseplant starts to take home. Class will be offered in-person, via Facebook Live and a recording will be available. Register at: https://kstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1GqKiI6nZ9NbSwC