

The Grapevine

A Plant for a Place

As we enter our second fall and winter of drought conditions it's become very apparent some of the plants that have been planted are not compatible with our weather conditions. While this year has been an exception and not the rule it is still important to use these as a benchmark when picking plants. This year has unfortunately been a litmus test for some plants and has truly highlighted the need to plant the right plant in the right place. This week I want to highlight some great resources on plants that do well in our portion of Kansas should you need to replace plants next year.

Kansas sits on a wonderful transition zone of weather conditions. We have the summer heat similar to Texas and areas further south while we have winter temperatures that are closer to Michigan and places that are quite a bit further north. Throw in our wonderful spring winds, ice storms, the occasional blizzard and you provide some of the worst growing conditions for plants in the United States. To survive here our plants really need to be tough and able to handle whatever nature throws at them.

Trees are a big part of the landscape from small shrubby trees all the way up to giant towering oaks. If you visit a nursery or garden center you will see a wide variety of trees available and unfortunately there are several of them that will not do well in our portion of Kansas. The John Pair Center in Haysville has been testing trees in Kansas conditions since the 1970's and is a wonderful source of information on trees that truly survive in South Central Kansas. Through that work and research a publication on [Drought-Tolerant trees for South Central Kansas](#) was developed to help homeowners pick trees that survive well in our area. The John Pair Center is currently evaluating Red Maples to identify varieties that do best in our area. More information on that research will come out in a few years. If you have an area that tends to stay wet or exceptionally dry the publication [Trees and shrubs for Difficult Places](#) can be a great resource for finding a plant that will tolerate these conditions.

Annuals are among the most popular plants to add season long color in the landscape. Depending on your location and site conditions you can find an annual in every color that will work in that spot. One of the biggest challenges with annuals is picking one that will tolerate the sun and moisture conditions in your location. Through the Prairie Star program K-STATE tested a variety of different annuals throughout the state to see which ones will tolerate our conditions. Check out the [Prairie Star Annuals](#) publication for more information.



Earlier this year I talked about xeriscaping and developing a landscaping that reduces the use of water. In years of drought and even in years where we have adequate rain water-wise landscaping can help homeowners save time and money. Choosing the right plant for those landscaping areas makes a world of difference in developing a water-wise landscape. Sedgwick county has developed a wonderful handout called [Water-wise Plants: Trees and Ornamentals for South Central Kansas](#).

Choosing the right plant for the location is the key to being successful growing plants in Kansas. This year has been a wild ride of a cool, damp spring followed by a hot and dry summer. These conditions have really showcased the need to pick the right plant for your landscaping. For more publications and information check out the [K-STATE Horticulture](#) website. Be sure to also check out the [Plant Search feature](#) which helps you pick a plant based on your conditions. Happy Growing everyone!!

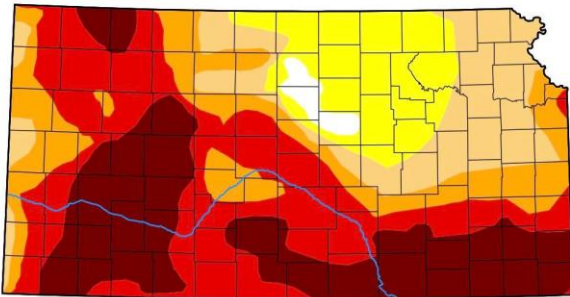
Plant of the Week-

This week's plant of the week is the Ginkgo. This unique plant is a native of China and is the last living species in the order Ginkgoales. The Ginkgo or Maidenhair tree is considered a living fossil and is one of the oldest tree species still around in the world today. This tree is known for its unusual fan shaped leaves that turn a brilliant yellow/gold in the fall and pale gray bark. In terms of yellow fall color this tree is second to none though the color can be short lived. If you are looking for a tough tree that will withstand storms, poor soils and is virtually pest free the Ginkgo is the tree for you. The one downside is that the Ginkgo can be slow growing to its maximum height of 75' or so. Use this tree as a lawn tree or as a street tree. If you want to plant a ginkgo be sure you purchase a male tree as the females have small round tan to orange fruit that has a truly noxious smell similar to dog poop. Any cultivars grown on the market now are males so purchase a cultivar not a seedling, The fruit is not eaten by wildlife so avoid a female Ginkgo for use in any landscape. There are several cultivars on the market including 'Autumn Gold', 'Fastigiata', 'Princeton Sentry', and 'Lakeview'. If you have space for a tree to grow, want gorgeous fall color, and want a tough tree that will handle most conditions consider planting a Ginkgo in your yard.



Issue of the Week-

This week's issue is drought stress. The Drought Monitor shows how dry we truly are starting to get. Unfortunately, meaningful rain does not appear to be in our forecast. As we enter our second winter of drought conditions we are going to need to do some supplemental watering throughout the winter to help our plants. Due to the heat and the drought many of our trees and shrubs are starting to lose their leaves early and drought conditions can also cause dieback and even the death of a tree if the dry conditions continue on too long. Drought conditions impact the root hairs of a tree causing them to die back which reduces the water absorbing capacity of the plant. Older, more established plants are able to handle this lack of root hairs however over time even mature trees will be impacted. This fall and winter it will be very important to water trees, shrubs, perennials and lawns to help them survive the winter. Water every couple of weeks or approximately 1 to 2 times a month till spring when the temperatures are warm and the ground is not frozen. Try to water so the soil is damp down to 8-12 inches deep rather than just watering on the surface. Unfortunately, it will take several years for even mature trees to recover from severe drought conditions (which means some plants may still be recovering from the last drought we had) but we can help our plants make it through the winter with just a little bit of help.



Reminders-

- Dig sweet potatoes before the first frost. Sweet potatoes will not lose flavor or get woody if left in the ground however they can be damaged by frost and shorten their shelf life.
- Start bringing houseplants inside.

Upcoming Events

- **November 2, 2022: Wildlife Damage Prevention and Control in the Lawn and Garden**
Have your prized vegetables and beautiful landscapes ever become an all-you-can-eat buffet for local wildlife? Learn how to identify the squirrels, rabbits, deer, gophers, or other wildlife that may be causing problems, and better understand how to prevent their damage. Join Dr. Ricketts, as he shares practical tips to prevent and control common wildlife damage issues. For more information or to register [click here](#).