

The Grapevine

It's time for Garlic!!!

I will admit, I love cooking with garlic and not just because it keeps vampires away. Garlic adds so much flavor to dishes and different varieties add different flavors. This fall I'm going to embark on a new adventure and try planting garlic in my garden for the first time. As October begins we are entering the ideal time to plant garlic and be ready to harvest it next summer. First let's take a look at the different types of garlic.

Garlic is a relative of onions and chives that has been grown for centuries for both its culinary uses as well as its medicinal use. Each garlic will grow a bulb of several separate cloves. There are two different types of garlic that can be planted in the home garden. The first type is a soft neck garlic. This type of garlic has the longest storage life, forms bulbs with more cloves and they form a stalk that is easy to braid for storage. They do tend to have less flavor and be harder to peel than the other type but their shelf life makes up for it. Inchelium Red and Silver White are two soft neck varieties that do well in Kansas. Both varieties will store for 9 to 12 months. Inchelium red has a spicier flavor right after it's been harvested but mellows with time while Silver White has a mild flavor when harvested that gets more bite as it ages. The other type of garlic is called hard neck garlic. This type is more flavorful, is easier to peel, have larger bulbs with fewer cloves however it doesn't last as long when stored. Music and Chesnok Red are two varieties of hard neck garlic that do well in Kansas. Music has very large bulbs with big cloves. Both varieties will last about 4 to 6 months in storage. Hard neck varieties are hardier and tolerate colder temperatures than soft neck varieties however in Kansas we can successfully grow both types of garlic due to our fairly mild winters.



Garlic is best planted in mid to late October and then will be harvested in July. Be sure to purchase your garlic from a reputable source. It's best to avoid planting garlic you bought from the grocery store. Separate each clove from the garlic bulb, be sure when you plant to put the pointy side up about 6 inches apart in rows that are spaced about 12" apart. Plant the garlic approximately 2" deep in the soil then cover the cloves with soil and mulch in to protect them from our freeze/thaw cycle in the spring. Be sure to water things in well and continue to water them throughout the fall into the winter if there isn't any precipitation. It is possible to over water and rot the cloves so avoid overwatering. Fertilize the area with a general-purpose fertilizer if a soil test indicates it's necessary.

Garlic will start to root once it's planted and start to send up a shoot even if nothing is visible above the ground. Once the ground freezes the garlic will sit over winter and then emerge in the spring when the temperatures warm up. Continue watering the garlic as needed throughout the growing season until it's close to time to harvest it. Garlic bulbs are ready to harvest when the lower third of the leaves have turned brown and dried out which typically is mid-July through early August depending on the variety. Picking garlic too early will result in small bulbs but waiting too long will result in cloves leaning away from the bulbs.

Garlic is a relatively easy plant to grow in the garden, just be sure to remember where you planted it so you don't till the plants up or plant something over the top of them in the spring. It's also important to remember to water them some throughout the winter if we stay dry. I'm excited to try several different varieties and plant garlic in my garden this year. I've been very lucky that Chuck Otte, a former extension agent, has gifted me with some garlic to try for the coming year. I'll provide some updates on my garlic journey along with some tips and helpful hints in future newsletters. Happy Growing!!

Plant of the Week-

This week's plant of the week is the Blackhaw viburnum. This viburnum is the only one native to Kansas and as such it is very adapted to our conditions. The Blackhaw viburnum or *Viburnum rufidulum* goes by many names including Rusty Blackhaw, Southern Blackhaw, Nannyberry and Southern nannyberry. This viburnum is very adaptable and can be a 10-foot-tall multi stemmed shrub or a 30-foot-tall single



stemmed tree depending on the location and how much pruning you do on it. They will also tolerate full sun to partial shade. It has lustrous bright glossy green leaves that will turn pink to mauve to dark purple in autumn. There are beautiful clusters of white flowers in the spring that will turn into attractive blue fruit in the fall. This plant will tolerate moist soils up to dry out cropping's of soil. Use this as a hedge, shrub border or in naturalized plantings. It does provide nectar for pollinators and fruit for birds or small animals so it would work well in a pollinator or wildlife garden.



Issue of the Week-

This week's issue of the week is fall needle drop of evergreens. Natural needle drop on evergreens is starting earlier than normal this year with the hot and dry conditions we have had. Every year we receive calls from concerned homeowners about the dying needles on the inner portion of their pines, spruce and arborvitae. Evergreens will shed their inner needles that are approximately four years old every fall. Those needles aren't productive anymore and the tree sheds them because of this. The inner needles will start to turn yellow to brown and then slowly fall off throughout the fall and into winter. As long as the inner needles are the only one that are turning colors your tree most likely is fine if there is no banding noted on the needles, if the outer needles are starting to turn colors there could be a disease or other issue going on.



Reminders-

- Herbs can be dug from garden and transplanted into pots for indoor use during the winter.
- 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

- **October 5, 2022: Improving Soil Health in the Landscape and Garden**
Is your landscape and garden soil healthy? Learn how to measure and improve your soil's health in the home landscape and garden. Dr. DeAnn Presley, Professor and Extension Specialist for Environmental Soil Science and Management, will explore ways to improve your soil, including cover crops and soil amendments. Learn how to build your soil's organic matter, and improve the growing potential of your soil. The KSRE Garden hour sessions are held via Zoom starting at noon. For more information or to register [click here](#).
- **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](#).