

# The Grapevine

## Fall Gardening

It's hard to believe that July has already arrived, I'm not sure where the summer has gone so far but it doesn't look like it's going to slow down anytime soon. While our warm season crops are thriving and loving the summer heat, it's time for our cool season crops to start winding down for the summer. Last week I harvested the last of the radishes and lettuce from the Victory Garden here in El Dorado and the cauliflower is showing the stress of the summer heat we have been having. As quickly as the summer is going it's time to start thinking about starting our fall garden plants and even start planting some of them right now. When I lived in North Dakota, fall gardening wasn't an option as the growing season was simply too short. In Kansas, fall gardening is an excellent but often overlooked gardening season. In some cases, by the time fall arrives we are tired of being in the garden, but late season crops can extend your gardening season and provide fresh veggies all the way to winter depending on the crop. In many cases fall grown vegetables are of higher quality and better for preservation.

Most of our cool season vegetables can easily be grown in the fall except for peas as they require cooler temperatures to germinate than we get in July or August. Some common vegetables grown in the fall include potatoes, green beans, beets, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, kale, lettuce, radish and spinach. Some of those crops can often be overwintered such as kale and spinach by only harvesting the outside leaves and mulching the plant in the garden. Most of the vegetables can be started from seed, however vegetables such as broccoli, cauliflower or cabbage should be started in containers or in a shady spot in the garden to be transplanted in mid-August. When seeding fall crops, plant the seeds slightly deeper than you would in the spring and water them consistently to help keep the soil as cool as possible.



The timing of planting fall vegetables can be critical to their success. Because of the warm soil temperatures seedlings will often germinate faster in the summer than they will in the spring. Here is a brief calendar:

- Mid-July- Start planting potatoes. It's best to use fresh seed potatoes rather than trying to plant the potatoes you just harvested. They have a dormancy requirement and won't sprout soon enough. It can be hard to find seed potatoes in July so you might have to order them.
- Late-July seed your longer season, heat tolerant crops such as carrots, beets and green beans.
- Late July-Early August- seed spinach and longer season head lettuce. (Leaf lettuce will be started later in the fall.)
- Early August- Transplant broccoli, cabbage and cauliflower seedlings into the garden.
- Mid to Late August- Start radishes and leaf lettuce.

Establishing your fall crops might be the hardest part of gardening in the late summer to early fall. The extra watering or heavy rainfalls can form a crust on the top of the soil. If possible, use a soaker hose to prevent the crust build up. You can also sprinkle compost, peat moss, perlite, or vermiculite over the top of the rows to prevent the crusting from occurring. Gradually reduce your watering as the seedlings grow to encourage a deeper root system. The vegetables will likely require some fertilizer two to four weeks after they have been planted or transplanted. It's best to wait to fertilizer after the seedlings are growing so you don't burn them when they are young.

Fall vegetable gardens can be an excellent extension of your gardening season. The cooler weather as the vegetable's mature leads to tastier and higher quality vegetables versus the ones that ripen in the heat of the summer. With just a little bit of work you can easily enjoy fresh vegetables all through the growing year and even into the early to mid-winter. I hope your gardens and plants are looking great. Don't forget to come check out all the cool exhibits at the Butler County Fair or bring your own. Happy Growing!!!

### Pollinator Plant of the Week-

Our pollinator plant for the week is Bee balm. This native is a favorite of bees, hummingbirds and butterflies hence it's common name of "bee balm". This Kansas native perennial is a member of the mint family with square stems and can grow to a height of 4' tall. The native Bee balm has pale purple to pink blooms but there are several cultivated varieties that have bloom colors ranging from white to dark purple to red and are far more compact than the native version. Bee balsms are very long blooming perennials typically blooming in Late June through August. The Native American's used this plant for a variety of medicinal purposes ranging from treating colds and fevers to stomach pains, acne and respiratory difficulties. They would also use the leaves for a tea and to perfume their hair and clothes. Bee balm prefers full sun but will tolerate some shade. It is very tolerant of drought conditions once it is established but it prefers moist soil and is commonly found in roadside ditches, along stream banks and throughout pastures. Bee Balm is prone to powdery mildew in shady conditions or when watered overhead so care should be taken to water the base of the plant.



### Insect of the Week-

This week's insect is the Japanese Beetle. These imported beetles originated in Japan (hence the name) where they were only minor pests in their environment. Unfortunately, in the US they are one of the most destructive pests of lawns, gardens and ornamental plants that gardeners deal with. These beetles have a one-year life cycle with the adults hatching in May and laying eggs in July. Adults are less than 1/2" in length with a metallic green head and a bronze-colored body. The larvae or grub form is white in color and shaped like a "C". The grubs feed on the roots of lawn grasses under ground during the fall before burrowing deeper in the soil to overwinter. They eventually pupate in late spring before hatching into adults. The adults are equal opportunity feeders but prefer roses, maple trees, grapes, elms and crabapples.

Most healthy plants can withstand a small number of Japanese beetles so general watering and fertilizing will help reduce the impact, however younger plants or vegetable crops can be quickly desiccated if numbers become too high (Like the

grapevine in the picture, Photo courtesy of Nancy Gordon). If you have a small number of beetles on your plants, you can pick them off and throw them into a bucket of soapy water. Larger populations of beetles may require some chemical treatment. Neem Oil is an organic option however it only discourages the beetles from eating the plant and needs reapplied frequently, Spinosad is another organic option that kills the adults but again needs to be reapplied frequentl. Products containing permethrin, pyrethrin or carbaryl will all provide a couple weeks control but then will need reapplied. Any spraying should be done early in the morning or late in the evening to prevent harm to pollinators. Traps are not recommended as they attract more insects than enter the traps and can make feeding worse in the area rather than help control the issue.

Grubs are a major issue in some lawns. Most grasses can tolerate up to 10 grubs per square foot, however any number above that will cause dieback and browning of the grass. In heavily infested lawns the grass can be peeled up like a carpet due to grub feeding or it can be torn up by wildlife searching for the grubs. Control of the grubs should begin soon after they start to hatch in the late summer. Preventative herbicides can be applied up to four weeks before the eggs hatch and there are a wide variety of chemical options available. There is a biological option called Milky Spore Disease which has shown limited effectiveness against high populations and can take a while to establish but it only impacts Japanese Beetles and is an organic option. For more information on Japanese Beetles check out this publication: <https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF3488.pdf>



## Reminders-

- Treat for Japanese Beetles if necessary.
- Time to start seeds for fall gardening.
- Turn your compost pile periodically throughout the growing season.
- Watch for rust on hollyhock leaves. If you see some spots remove those leaves, when they are dry, as soon as possible and throw away to reduce the spread. You can spray the healthy foliage with a sulfur product to protect it, just be aware sulfur can burn foliage if the temperatures are above 85 degrees within the next 24 hours.

## Upcoming Events

- July 6, 2022: Growing Culinary Mushrooms at Home  
Mushrooms can be a fun and tasty addition to your garden and dinner table. Pam Paulsen, Reno County Horticulture Extension Agent, will cover some of the most commonly cultivated mushroom species and walk through the steps of how to grow them successfully at home. The KSRE Garden hour sessions are held via Zoom starting at noon. For more information or to register [click here](#).
- July 14-18, 2022: Butler County Fair  
Don't forget to stop by the Fairgrounds and check out all the 4-H and other exhibits at the Butler County Fair. Check out the Open class list and bring some of your projects or produce to exhibit at the fair this year!!!
- July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022: Fall Gardening  
Growing a garden doesn't just stop once the tomatoes and squash are planted in the spring. There are many crops that can be grown in the fall. Some vegetables such as broccoli, kale and carrots are actually better tasting if planted in the fall. Join us at the Augusta Community Garden to learn about planting a fall garden and get some tips on how to extend your gardening season later into the year. Class starts at 6:30.
- August 3, 2022: Landscaping for Wildlife  
How you landscape your property and the plants you select can create a welcome invitation for wildlife to visit your property. Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent, will discuss basic landscaping concepts that will encourage wildlife to visit your yard. Learn about recommended native plant material to utilize, as well as key management techniques that will provide benefits to many different wildlife species. The KSRE Garden hour sessions are held via Zoom starting at noon. For more information or to register [click here](#).
- August 4, 2022: Turf and Ornamental's Field Day @ John Pair Research Center  
The field day program is designed for all segments of the turf & ornamentals industry - lawn care, athletic fields, golf courses, landscape, nursery, and grounds maintenance. Included on the program are research presentations, problem diagnosis, commercial exhibitors, and equipment displays. There will be time to see current research, talk to the experts and get answers to your questions.