

K-STATE

Research and Extension

Butler County

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The Grapevine

Asparagus Care

One of the earliest of the spring vegetables, Asparagus, is a common and popular perennial plant. If maintained correctly, asparagus plantings can be productive for decades without being replanted. Asparagus typically can start being harvested in early to mid-April, depending on the year, and can be harvested for approximately six to eight weeks or till the spear size starts to decrease. At this point in time, you should stop harvesting the asparagus and leave the remaining spears to grow for the rest of the summer. Similar to rhubarb, asparagus needs those spears and leaves to store food reserves for the next growing season so that the asparagus can be productive for years to come. After you have stopped harvesting for the season, be sure to fertilize the asparagus bed using a balanced fertilizer such as a 10-10-10, 12-12-12, or something similar at the rate suggested on the bag. Be sure to continue to control weeds in and around your asparagus bed once you have stopped harvesting. In established beds, you can use a small tiller and till no more than two to three inches deep around the outside of the asparagus. Once the asparagus has grown up and has leaves similar to the photo, it will shade the ground and can help keep the weeds knocked down. Products containing trifluralin can be applied to a weed-free bed around the asparagus if weeds are a major issue. Older varieties of asparagus may also be susceptible to asparagus rust, which causes the leaves of new shoots to die and fall off. You can control this issue after the harvest season using a fungicide containing myclobutanil. Happy Growing!



Water, Water Everywhere.....

I think Tuesday last week was one for the record books for many places in Butler County. What started as just an inch or two of rain quickly turned into a hazardous situation. I ultimately ended up with just over six inches of rain at my house on the north end of town when I finally made it back home. I think all those rain dances we've been doing over the last few years of dry conditions finally went into effect. Now that the flooding has started to recede and clean-up has begun, there are a few concerns we need to address.



The first issue is with gardens that were exposed to flood waters. Floodwater that has washed in from rivers, creeks, or streams can bring in chemical contaminants like petroleum-based products, biological pathogens, and parasites from flooded sewage treatment plants and animal operations. In addition, wet produce may grow toxic mold. I've had several questions asking if the produce from

flooded gardens is safe to eat. This is a very difficult question to answer. The simplest and safest answer is a resounding, "No! You cannot eat produce from your flooded garden." All produce that is consumed uncooked or raw, e.g., spinach, lettuce, cabbage, should be discarded. Soft fruits, such as strawberries and all melons, must be discarded. Flood-damaged garden produce that is unfit for eating should not be preserved, including freezing, canning, or dehydrating. The recommended processing and cooking time may not be sufficient to kill pathogens. Early-season crops that will not be harvested for 120 days and have not been touched by floodwaters may be safe to eat if cooked or peeled. It must be completely intact, with no cracks or bruises. If you are unsure if flood water contacted the produce, throw it out! Late-season vegetables that come from flowers produced on growth that develops after floodwaters recede should be safe. You can replant after the soil has fully drained and the top two to three inches of soil have completely dried. This typically is a couple of weeks after the flooding has occurred. If the produce will come in direct contact with the ground, I would wait at least two months before planting again. Plants that can be started later in the late gardening season, after the flood, should be safe after an early spring flood.

Another concern is the impact that all the water will have on trees and shrubs. While the flood waters may have receded, all the rain can leave a lasting effect on the trees in our communities. All the moisture in the soil can cause destabilization of the tree, which can ultimately lead to it leaning or falling over, just like in the photo. Trees that suddenly begin to lean or even fall over due to the force of high water, wind, or soil erosion should be treated as a hazard if they are near people or structures. High water may also deposit a significant amount of silt on the root system of a tree. If more than an inch of silt is deposited, then some careful removal of that silt will benefit the tree. Burying the root system beneath a heavy layer of silt will reduce the root system's ability to exchange gases and negatively affect the tree. The duration of flooding or saturated soils will have a direct impact on a tree's ability to recover. This is mainly dependent on tree species. Most trees will recover from being inundated for less than a week, especially if the water is flowing instead of stagnant. Trees most sensitive to short-term flooding include redbud, walnuts, mulberry, upland oaks, most pines, and conifers such as spruce and Eastern redcedar. Honeylocust, elm, birch, and lowland oaks are more tolerant, surviving a few weeks of flooding and saturated soils.



Photo Credit: Heather Griffith

Fingers crossed we have a short spell of drier weather so our gardens no longer squish and we can get back into the gardens and flowerbeds. I hope you didn't suffer too much damage during the flooding and that your gardens recover soon. Contact our office if you have any questions or concerns about your garden!

Insect of the Week- Grasshoppers

There are over 100 species of grasshoppers in Kansas, but luckily, there are only a few that cause damage to our home landscapes and gardens. Typically, grasshoppers are more of a problem for rural locations, but they can also become a pest in urban gardens. Unfortunately, grasshoppers can be challenging to control because of their mobility, and one size doesn't fit all when it comes to reducing the population.



When it comes to biology, not all grasshoppers are created equal, even though there are some similarities between species. Most species of grasshoppers will lay their eggs in the fall in non-crop locations such as ditches and fencerows in pods of 8-30 eggs. The eggs will hatch from April to June, depending on the grasshopper species and the soil temperature. From there, the eggs will go through five stages of growth over 35-50 days before becoming adults. Those first few days after the eggs hatch significantly affect how many grasshoppers survive. If there are adverse weather conditions or the right food isn't available, many grasshoppers will die. Most species only have one lifecycle in a year. Still, the differences in how spring temperatures impact the hatching

of eggs and the stages can lead to successive hatchings of eggs and make it seem like an endless hatch of new grasshoppers all summer. What makes grasshopper control hard is that a hungry grasshopper can fly for miles looking for new food sources, so while you may have killed the grasshoppers in your yard, they can easily come in from somewhere else.

When they see a grasshopper in their yard, the first thought in many gardeners' minds is to control the insects; however, paying attention to what the grasshopper is eating before treating it is crucial. Many grasshoppers only feed on grasses and sedges; some restrict their feeding to weeds, and some eat broadleaf plants we want to keep. In a garden setting, carrots, lettuce, corn, and beans are the most likely to be eaten, while tomatoes, squash (leaves), and peas are the least likely. If they aren't feeding on your plants, leave them alone. Pick ornamental plants that are not a preferred food by grasshoppers; [Oklahoma State has an excellent list](#) to reduce the likelihood they will munch on your flowers, or provide a bait crop to keep the hopping insects happy and away from other plants. If a plant is susceptible to grasshopper damage and needs to be protected, use floating row covers over the plants to exclude the pests. If the infestation warrants spray, use chemicals with the active ingredients carbaryl, cyfluthrin, or acephate (ornamental plants only). Pyrethrins work, but only have a limited residual effectiveness on grasshoppers. Since the grasshoppers are mobile, you don't have to spray every plant in extensive areas for the chemical to be effective. You can usually get by with spraying only part (around 50%) of the plants to help control the insects. There are also grasshopper baits available on the market that can work for smaller areas, but can be cost-prohibitive for large lawns or gardens.



Grasshoppers will always be around and munching on plants, even in years when the population is lower. While they can be a pest, and the photo above gives me the heebie-jeebies, they are a valuable part of the ecosystem, providing food for birds, other insects, and, surprisingly, coyotes. Unless there is a significant infestation in your yard or garden, try providing bait crops, searching for egg-laying areas in the fall, or creating a yard where birds visit to help control these insects rather than resorting to sprays unless necessary.

Question of the Week- Mosquitos

With all the rain we have had over the last few weeks and the flooding last week, these flying pests have started to make their presence known. Mosquitos are unfortunately a common issue in our area, especially when we have lots of moisture. While a mosquito bite is usually a temporary irritation, it can transmit a variety of human and animal diseases, which we should avoid. Mosquitoes are small, primitive flies that breed near standing water. In their first few life stages, they depend entirely on water as they grow. The entire process from egg to adult can take as little as 7 to 10 days, depending on the species. Female mosquitoes are the only mosquitoes that feed on blood, and usually, they must have a meal before being able to lay eggs.



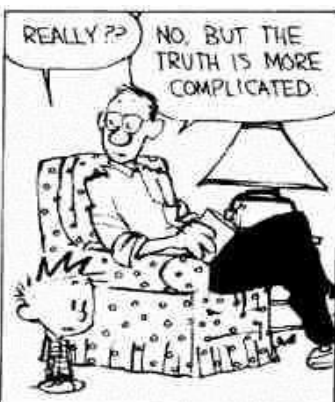
Many mosquito breeding sites can be traced to backyard containers filled with water, ponds, and other standing water. There is quite a bit of standing water from last week's rain. One of the easiest ways to reduce your mosquito population is to dump out toys, pots, bird feeders, etc, every couple of days to prevent mosquitoes from using them as a breeding ground. Unfortunately, this must be a community effort as mosquitoes can travel up to a half mile looking for a meal. If you can't get rid of all the standing water in your backyard, water treatment can prevent mosquito larvae from growing. There are a variety of products that are available to reduce the mosquito population. Mosquito foggers can temporarily relieve mosquitoes for an evening; there are also bug zappers and other mosquito trapping devices that can reduce the population. Use sprays with caution because they can harm beneficial insects as well. When outside, try to wear long sleeves, especially early in the morning or at night, and use a repellent.

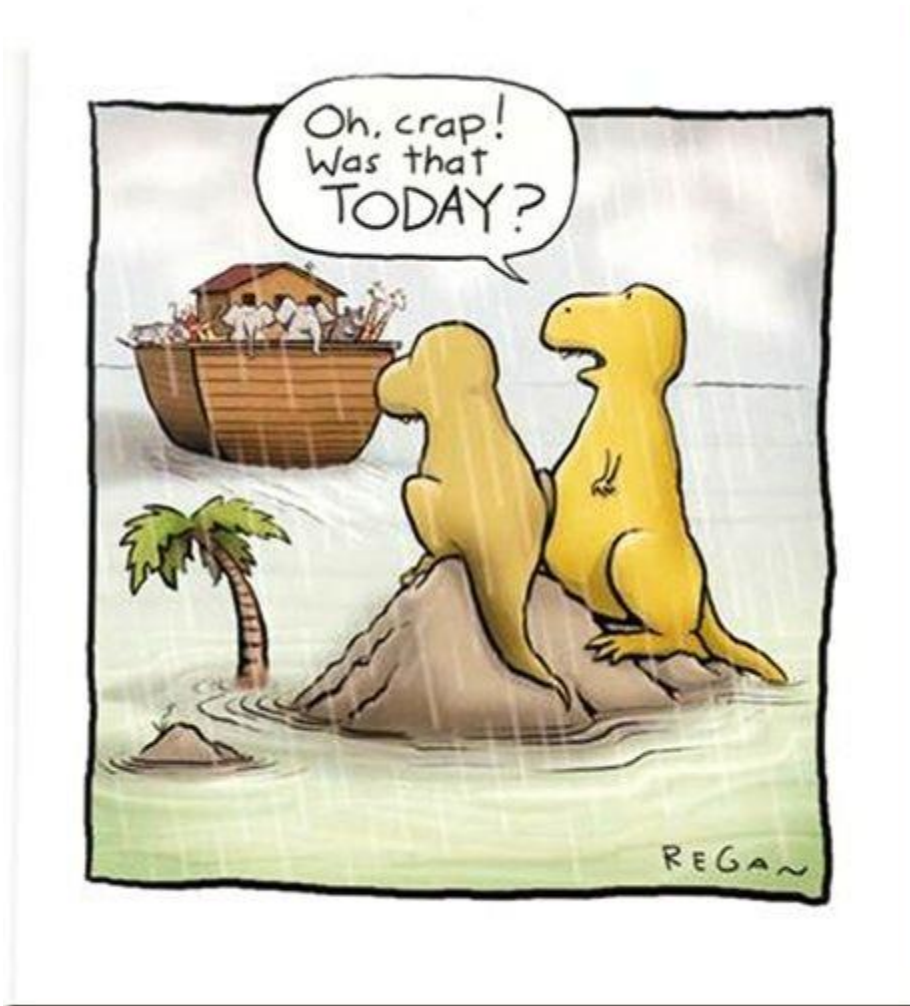
Video of the Week

Rain Gardens and Bioswales



Rain gardens are shallow, low areas in your yard planted with plants and grasses with hardy roots native to your location. The plants will help slow down the water flow and hold it in place until it can soak into the ground while filtering the water. While a rain garden or bioswale wouldn't have prevented the flooding last week, they can help with regular rains. Learn more about plants that work well for a rain garden. Watch the video on the [Kansas Healthy Yards and Gardens site](#).





Upcoming Events

Garden Hour Webinars:

July 2nd- Cutting Edge
Efforts in Kansas Demo
Gardens

August 6th- Innovations in
Horticultural Research at
Kansas State University

September 3rd- Shrubs
that Thrive in Kansas

Upcoming Events:

June 18th at 5:30 pm
Troubleshooting Issues in
the Garden at Benton
Community Building

Parmesan, Rosemary Carrot Fries



Ingredients:

- 3 to 4 large carrots, peeled
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- Leaves from 4 sprigs of fresh rosemary, chopped
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper

Directions

- Preheat oven to 400°F.
- Peel and cut the carrots lengthwise to resemble the shape of French fries.
- Mix olive oil, Parmesan, garlic powder, rosemary, salt, and pepper in a medium bowl.
- Add carrots and toss to coat.
- Place carrots on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper and bake for 15 to 20 minutes or until carrots become slightly crispy.
- Turn carrots over halfway through baking.

Recipe Source: [North Dakota State University](https://www.northdakotastate.edu/extension/recipes/parmesan-rosemary-carrot-fries)

City of Benton and K-State present:

BENTON GARDENING PROGRAM!

April 9 - December 17th - 5:30pm at the Community
Building

9
APRIL

Vegetable Garden Basics/Gearing up for Gardening

This beginner class will get you introduced to starting a garden
and what you'll need!

21
MAY

Gardening for Pollinators

Learn how gardening for pollinators will help with the
production of your garden. What to plant/when to plant!

18
JUNE

Troubleshooting Issues in the Garden

Learn what to do if something doesn't seem right in your
garden. Got the droopies? Got the wilties? Come and learn!

9
JULY

Fall Gardening

End of summer doesn't mean the end of gardening! Come and
learn about options for growing in the fall.

17
SEPT

Season Extension of the Garden

This class teaches you the tips and tricks for getting every bit
out of your garden. Show up and grow up!

19
NOV

Houseplant Care

Let's take it inside! Houseplants can be the best of friends.
Learn how to nourish your friends at this wonderful class.

17
DEC

Feeding the Birds

One reviewer stated "This class is for the birds." We took it as a
compliment. Come and find out what they like, and what is
best for them!

FREE FREE FREE - Let's make Benton beautiful!

This is a program through K-State Research and Extension/Butler County in
conjunction with the brand new seed library program at City Hall.. There is no
charge for this. Put in on your calendar and show up for some fun times!
Refreshments will be provided and there will be enough fun for everyone.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
CALL LYNELL AT 316-778-1625