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The Grapevine

Wild Violets

Over the last week, I finally finished cleaning the previous year's leaves and some weeds from my flowerbeds. As I was working, one of my biggest issues has been the wild violets scattered throughout my flowers and lawn. While wild violets are helpful for pollinators early in the spring, they are trying to choke out the desirable plants I have growing. Wild violets are a perennial forb with heart-shaped leaves that bear solitary flowers on peduncles from the leaf axils. Flower color varies from blue, violet, dark violet, and rarely white, with flowering normally occurring from March to June, but may persist longer in some years. Hybridization with other violets is common, making an exact identification nearly impossible.

Wild violets are very difficult to control. Though products with 2,4-D, MCPP, and Dicamba (Trimec, Weed-B-Gon, Weed Out, etc.) will provide limited control, products with triclopyr (Turflon Ester, Confront, Cool Power, Horsepower, Weed-B-Gon Chickweed, Clover & Oxalis) are much more effective but must be used at the highest recommended rate. The best time to apply herbicides is in the fall (late October – early November) when the temperature is 50 degrees or higher. Wild violets can be treated either in spring or fall, but are more easily controlled in the fall because they are actively moving materials from the top portion of the plant to the roots. Herbicides will translocate to the roots as well and will kill the plant from the roots up. Happy Growing!



Growing Vegetables in Containers

There is nothing like freshly picked vegetables straight from your own garden to include with meals during the summer. Growing up, we had a big garden and grew a wide variety of our own vegetables and fruits in a small orchard that we froze, canned, and ate fresh. My current garden space is slightly limited, so I've started adding plants in containers. Over the last decade, growing vegetables in containers has been a rapidly expanding trend here in the US, with people in apartments wanting to grow their own veggies or having issues with soil conditions or too much shade in their yard. The horticultural world has noticed that new varieties that will grow well in containers have rapidly developed. There are currently varieties of every type of vegetable available that were created for growing in containers, making it easier than ever to try.

The first, and in some ways the most important part, of container gardening is the container itself. Containers can be made from various materials, including clay, plastic, cloth, wood, concrete blocks, or even wire baskets with sphagnum moss, as long as the container has never contained any toxic chemicals. Some of the cheapest container options can be storage totes, five-gallon buckets, protein tubs from livestock, or even old swimming pools your kids have outgrown. The key is that they need to be at least 6 inches deep and have drainage holes, which you can easily add yourself. Avoid dark colored pots because they tend to heat up faster, and the heat can damage the roots of your plants. Large vegetables such as tomatoes, squash, watermelon, and corn will need containers that are a minimum size of a five-gallon bucket. The bigger the container, the more room for roots; the cooler the roots will stay, with more soil to buffer the temperatures. If you are worried about your plants drying out during the hot summer days, self-watering containers can be purchased, similar to the one in the picture on the right, or they are easy to make.



Once you have a container, the next step is figuring out where to put it. Fruiting vegetables need 8 or more hours of sunlight a day, while root and leaf crops need approximately 6 hours of sunlight. Figure out where you want to put your container so that it will receive the maximum amount of light possible. You should decide where to put your containers before filling them, because they get very heavy. A word of caution, water from the containers can stain decks. To prevent staining, you can use saucers to catch excess water (which can help avoid angering your neighbors if you live in an apartment), but they do need to be emptied after a rain or watering, so the plants don't stand in water, or you can place the containers.



Once you have a container and know where you will put it, the next step is to fill it up with media of some kind. Whatever media or mix you use should provide nutrients for the plant, hold moisture, allow for maximum root growth, and support the plant so it doesn't fall over. I will never recommend using just straight garden dirt or topsoil in containers. It turns into a rock as it dries out and becomes compacted, so the roots can't grow through it. You can use topsoil that has been pasteurized as part of a mix, but it should never be more than 10% of the mix, and only use it in big pots or raised beds. A peat or coco coir-based potting mix is your best option for containers in combination with compost. This combination is lighter in weight but will hold adequate water for your vegetables to grow. You can reuse your soil for several years, as long as you didn't have any major

disease issues. I would refresh the soil every couple of years by adding new compost or potting soil to replace the nutrients used by the plants every year.

The final step is determining what vegetables to plant in a container. You can grow any vegetable in a container that you would grow in the ground; you have to pick the right variety. When looking at varieties, find ones labeled “dwarf” or “bush” varieties. A wide array of varieties have been developed strictly for containers, and they are usually labeled as such. Tomatoes, peas, and vining crops will need some support to grow. A tomato cage or trellis can help keep them contained and prevent them from sprawling everywhere on your deck. I’ve included a list of recommended varieties at the end of this Grapevine to give you an idea of the options.



As with all container plants, your vegetables will need to be watered regularly, especially later in the summer when we get really hot. One way to reduce the amount of water is to put a mulch layer down over the top of your soil to reduce evaporation and help keep the soil cooler. Fertilizer will also be necessary to keep the plants producing all summer long. I typically mix a slow-release vegetable fertilizer when I put my soil in the containers. This way, my vegetables get some fertilizer every time I water. I’ll fertilize every couple of weeks with a water-soluble general fertilizer (10-10-10 or 14-14-14) once the plants start to set blooms and produce fruit. I tend to wait to fertilize my tomatoes until they set blooms because I want them to produce tomatoes, not just grow impressive tops, which I have had happen. I do try to “flush” the soil periodically by watering it thoroughly till the excess water runs out to prevent the buildup of salts from the fertilizer in the soil. Monitor your plants for disease, insect, and nutrient issues. These can usually be corrected, but it’s easier to fix if you catch it early.

Container gardening is a wonderful option for people who cannot otherwise garden in the ground or have no interest in gardening in the ground. Even if you have soil issues, no room in your backyard, live in an apartment, or physically can’t get into the garden anymore, you can still have fresh vegetables all summer.

Insect of the Week- Bagworms

Bagworms will begin hatching soon across the area. In a normal year, they hatch in mid-May through June.

However, everything has been early this year, so I suspect they will also be. Once they hatch, they start moving out of their parents’ home to establish a new home of their own.



Bagworms are so named because of the “bag” they create around themselves to camouflage themselves from predators. Larvae typically feed on the plant from which they hatched or one nearby, but they can be carried to other plants via the wind and a long silk thread. Bagworms will eat on almost any plant, but prefer junipers or arborvitae. These insects usually go unnoticed until their bags are 1-2” in size and hang from the plant like little Christmas ornaments. Control is best two weeks after they have hatched to ensure all the larvae have started to

feed, typically about the mid to later half of June, but that depends on when they start hatching. There are several active ingredients that can be used to kill bagworms, including Spinosad, permethrin, acephate, and cyfluthrin. Be sure to thoroughly cover all the foliage to kill the bagworms. If you overlook the bagworms till August, it’s best to pick them off since chemical applications at that point are often unsuccessful.

Question of the Week- Cedar Apple Rust

The bright orange, gelatinous tendrils in the photo to the right raised our question of the week. Cedar-apple rust is a common disease of apple and flowering crabapple in Kansas. These rust fungi spend a portion of their life cycle on apple and flowering crabapple, and the remaining portion on species of *Juniperus* (which includes eastern red cedar). This rust fungus can result in considerable damage to rosaceous plants by causing premature defoliation, fruit distortion, and abortion. The effects of this disease on junipers are minimal. Symptoms of cedar-apple rust on flowering crab and apple are easily identified. In late spring or early summer, bright, yellow-orange spots approximately 1/8 to 1/4 inch in diameter form on the upper surface of leaves. These spots gradually enlarge and turn orange. (See photo below) On a juniper tree, the



fungus starts as small brown galls that enlarge over a two-year period. In the spring, the fungus emerges from the galls via orange, gelatinous tendrils, and the spores spread to susceptible hosts. The severity of rust infection on apples in the spring highly depends on weather conditions. It is also dependent on the amount of infection that occurred two years previously on juniper, since those infections eventually produce the active galls of the current year that, in turn, produce the spores which infect the apple. Fungicide sprays during April and May are critical to preventing disease on susceptible varieties. The first spray should go down when leaves appear. A fungicide that is available to homeowners and very effective for control of apple scab and cedar apple rust is myclobutanil (Immunox, Fungi-Max, and F-Stop Lawn & Garden Fungicide). Sprays should be done on a 7- to 10-day schedule to keep the protective chemical cover on the rapidly developing leaves and fruit. These diseases are usually only a problem during April and May.



Video of the Week

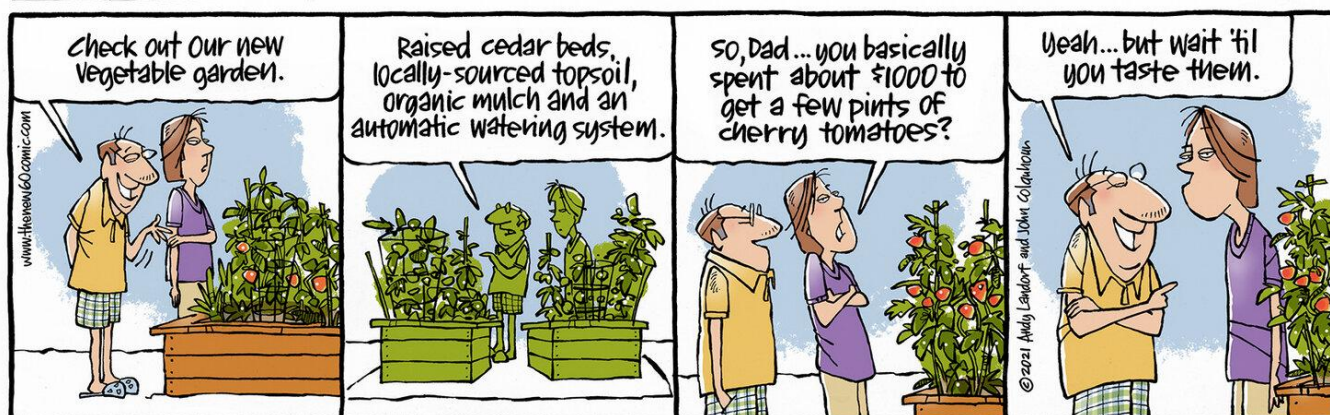
Proper Placement of Rain Gauge

In order to have an accurate measure of precipitation, it's important to place the rain gauge in an open area. Placing it close to buildings, trees, and shrubs can cause the rain gauge to show inaccurate rainfall. To watch the video, check out this link:

<https://kansashealthyyards.org/all-videos/video/proper-placement-of-a-rain-gauge>



The New 60



Upcoming Events

Garden Hour Webinars:
May 7th- Methods to Increase Vegetable Yield

June 4th- Native and Ornamental Grasses for Kansas

July 2nd- Cutting Edge Efforts in Kansas Demo Gardens

Upcoming Events:

May 8th at 5:30 pm
Plant Swap at the Andover Library

May 14th at 6 pm
Attracting Pollinators to the Garden at the Bradford Memorial Library

May 21st at 5:30 pm
Gardening with Pollinators at Benton Community Building

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

May Gardening Calendar

Vegetables and Fruits

- Plant tomato, pepper, and eggplant transplants in early May
- Seed sweet corn, cucumbers, squash, beans, and warm-season vegetables
- Mound soil around potato plants to encourage tuber formation
- Harvest fresh asparagus until the spear size decreases
- Remove rhubarb seed stalks to encourage leaf growth
- Plant kitchen herbs for summer use in dishes or food preservation
- Treat fruit trees with needed chemicals to control insects and disease
- Thin heavy fruit set on apples to increase fruit size and the next year's crop

Flowers

- Plant annual flowers for summer color
- Continue to plant and divide perennials
- Mulch flower gardens for weed control and moisture retention
- Begin pinching chrysanthemums for bushier plants
- Do not remove foliage from spring bulbs till it dies naturally
- Plant container gardens and hanging baskets

Lawns

- Reduce the thatch layer from zoysia by verticutting or core aerating
- Sod or spring zoysia lawns to fill in bare areas
- Fertilize zoysia lawns with a high-nitrogen fertilizer to promote green-up and summer growth
- Apply a slow-release nitrogen fertilizer to tall fescue to promote summer growth if desired. Lower-maintenance lawns should skip this application
- Mow tall fescue at 3 inches tall
- Spot treat broadleaf weeds
- Withhold watering until needed to promote a drought-tolerant lawn
- Sharpen mower blades as needed

Trees and Shrubs

- Plant new trees and shrubs
- Prune spring-flowering shrubs after bloom to shape plants and encourage flowers next year
- Mulch around woody plants to conserve moisture and control weeds
- Water young ornamentals as needed
- Remove tree wraps for summer growth
- Fertilize trees to help increase growth rates
- Be cautious using line trimmers and mowers around trees and shrubs to avoid damaging the bark, aka "mower blight"

Houseplants

- Move plants outdoors by gradually increasing their exposure to light
- Fertilize plants to promote summer development
- Rotate plants to develop a well-rounded plant
- Repot plants into a one-inch larger pot
- Check for insects

Plant Swap

Thursday, May 8th

5:30PM-7PM
in the Art Gallery

Do you have extra garden plants or houseplants? Do you need more variety in your garden? Come to the Plant Swap and trade plants with other gardeners and plant lovers. Gardeners of all skill levels and ages are welcome to join!

Calla Edwards and Master Gardeners will lead the event.



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