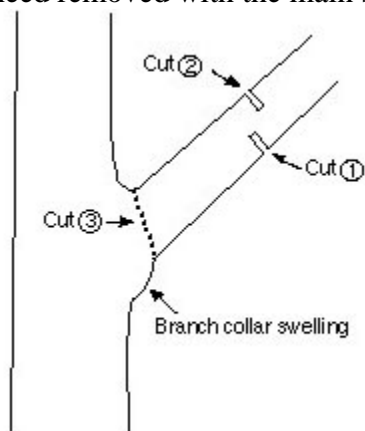


# The Grapevine

## After the Storm

Spring in Kansas often brings severe weather and with it comes damage to trees. As you start to pick up the pieces after severe weather caused damage I wanted to talk about how to handle storm damage to trees. Unfortunately, severe weather is going to continue to happen, we do live in Kansas after all, and while we can't control the weather we can have the tools in place to handle the aftermath. Your first priority should be any dangling limbs or limbs that are barely connected to the tree. These limbs can easily fall, hurt people or property and should be removed ASAP before you do anything else with the tree. After you have removed the hazards it's time to take a break and deal with other issues. The trees, for the most part, have stood for years and waiting a few days or weeks will not hurt them in the long run. Often our first thought is to immediately get the tree taken care of, and while that's important to do if the tree or branches pose a danger to humans or property, general pruning can wait.

The second step is to assess the damage done and determine the best steps to handle it. Damage to trees can range from just a few small broken limbs to major structural damage. Once you have checked the area for any safety concerns (powerlines, dangling limbs, etc) look over the tree. Trees that are missing less than 50% of their canopy and have little damage to the main trunk or major limbs will survive and be just fine with some pruning. Once a tree has lost more than 50% of it's canopy it becomes a bit trickier to determine if a tree can be salvaged or not. If the main structure of the tree is still intact (trunk and main limbs) then the tree could potentially be saved but that depends on the sentimental value of the tree, how much it would cost to replace it and the health of the tree before the storm. Trees like the one above will need removed with the main structure being broken.



Once you have assessed the damage done to the tree and have determined what needs to be pruned out it's time to clean up the tree. Before doing that first ask yourself if you feel comfortable doing the pruning, how high up in the tree you have to get and how big of limbs you need to prune. It maybe best to hire a professional arborist for pruning high in the tree and dealing with large limbs. When pruning branches that are over 3" in diameter I recommend using the three cut method to prevent tearing the bark. The first cut is on the bottom side of the limb about a foot or so from the trunk, this cut prevents the bark from tearing when the limb falls off. The second cut is from the top is 2-3 inches beyond the first cut and goes all the way through the limb. This cut removes most of the weight from the branch and makes it easier to handle. The last cut is just beyond the branch

collar which is where a slight swelling is or wrinkle in the bark on the tree. This collar contains the cells to heal the branch after the cut. If bark was torn when limbs broke off during the storm prune off the loose bark back to where it is solidly attached to encourage growth and healing. Wound treatments are not needed when pruning branches and, in some cases, can slow the healing of the plant.

Commonly trees will be blown over in storms and while large trees that have fallen over cannot be saved, smaller trees with at least 1/2 of their roots still in the ground could be pulled back upright and staked. Before the tree is pulled upright, remove some soil from the hole so the roots are back below the ground level. Once the tree is pulled back up cover the roots with dirt as needed. Stake the tree using 2-3 lines. After a disaster and a tree has been damaged it is very common for people to want to pamper their tree and give it extra attention while it is recovering. This can actually cause more issues for our trees. If your tree is in your yard and you are fertilizing your lawn, your tree is getting all the nutrients it needs and extra fertilizer will not help it recover. Most trees will survive



without extra water, however if we continue with dry weather it can be beneficial to water your tree once a week. If you are already watering your lawn, your tree will be just fine. Our trees are very resilient and very little care is needed after a storm to help them survive. It is important to keep an eye on damaged trees for several years after the storm as insects and diseases are more likely to infect trees that are stressed from the damage. While there are chemicals you could apply they likely would do more harm than good in the long run. If you do start seeing an issue first get it diagnosed so you are able to treat it properly, then treat.

Last week's storms are unfortunately not going to be the last we encounter and even in the winter our trees can be damaged. The best treatment for your trees is to make sure they are as healthy as possible prior to the storm with proper care and periodic pruning as needed. While no amount of prior care can prevent all damage, a healthy tree is more likely to recover than one that was already struggling. Please contact our office if you have damage to trees and need advice on care and if the tree is salvageable. I would be happy to come and help you out. I've also included a link to the website to find [certified arborists](#) in our area. For a visual walk through of how to assess tree damage check out this [video by Oklahoma State Extension](#). Happy Growing everyone!!!

### Weed of the Week- Orchard grass

This week's weed is Orchardgrass. This grassy perennial weed often infests cool-season lawns, especially K-31 tall fescue lawns where it is often a contaminant of the seed. Orchardgrass is a perennial, cool season grass that is characterized by clumps of light green to bluish green foliage, flat stems and a distinct ligule at the base of the blade. Orchardgrass spreads via seed or tillers from the main plant. Because of its lighter color, coarse texture and faster growth, orchardgrass is not desirable in the home lawn. Unfortunately controlling a grass within a grass is difficult and the only control method is with a non-selective herbicide such as glyphosate and spot spraying the areas with the undesirable grass and then replanting desirable turf in that spot. The best way to keep orchardgrass out of your lawn is to prevent it in the first place. Be sure to read the label of any lawn seed that you purchase and check the "other crop seed" portion to make sure that it is zero. Unfortunately K-31 fescue is almost always contaminated with orchardgrass so I would avoid planting that cultivar if possible unless the contamination isn't a concern.



### Plant of the Week- Iris



This week's plant is the beautiful spring blooming Iris. This plant is one of the easiest perennial plants to grow and provides an abundance of beauty through the home landscape. Iris come in a range of sizes from less than a foot tall to over three feet tall. Iris flowers come in almost every color of the rainbow from white to dark purple to blue and even multi colored. The name "Iris" is actually derived from the Greek word meaning "rainbow" referring to the range of colors available. According to Greek mythology, whenever the gods wanted to communicate with mortals their messenger was a golden-winged goddess named Iris who traveled on a rainbow. Legend has it that the colorful flowers sprung up at the end of the rainbow where ever she stepped. The iris is also featured in ancient Egyptian mythology and in the Christian history as well with the fleur-de-lis. Iris blooms are unique in their ruffled appearance and each bloom has six petals. Three petals called "standards" extend upwards while three petals called "falls" hang down. Iris are easy to grow but they do need at least 6 to 8 hours of sunlight in order to thrive and bloom. Iris clumps do need to be divided periodically as they don't bloom as much when they become crowded. Divide iris in the fall every three to four years by removing several small divisions or digging the entire clump and replanting a few rhizomes. Be careful not to plant them too deep as iris rhizomes prefer to be on the soil surface. Because of their ease of dividing, Iris are among the most shared plants in the world.



## Issue of the Week- Tall Fescue Lawns

There has been multiple reports of tall fescue lawns that have started greening up this spring and then patches of the lawn started to turn brown. There are a variety of reasons that could be causing this ranging from drought issues to diseases to insects. If you have some of these spots showing up in your yard be sure to inspect them thoroughly. Check for leaf blades cut off at the ground level as this would indicate the possibility of an insect causing the damage. There are a couple insects that could be causing issues this time of year. The first is the sod webworm which is pictured to the right. These caterpillars have dark heads and rows of light brown spots arranged in rings around greenish-gray bodies. They live near the soil surface in silken shelters covered with bits of grass. The adults are small whitish-gray moths that are flushed from the grass when people walk through it. They fly in a jerky zig zag manner. Bronze cutworms are another species of caterpillar that has been found damaging cool season grasses this spring. Bronze cutworms have a brown head with a darker brown body and light brown stripes running the length of their body. They feed at night but cutting off the grass at the soil surface. If you do have brown spots in your yard be sure to inspect the area carefully as the damage could be one of the above caterpillars but it also could just be drought damage or even warm season turf greening up later than normal. Don't just apply an insecticide without proper inspection. Treatment is best done in the evening when the insects are close to the soil surface.



## Reminders-

- Turn compost pile
- Prune spring-flowering shrubs such as forsythia and lilac after blooming if needed
- Side dress cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower 3 weeks after transplanting. See <https://www.riley.k-state.edu/docs/lawnandgardenandother/sidedressing.pdf> for side dressing chart.
- Side dress onions 2 to 4 weeks after transplanting.
- Water trees and shrubs that have been planted in the last two to three years if drought conditions persist.

## Video of the week: Butterfly Gardens

Butterflies are fun to watch fluttering in the garden. To attract them, a butterfly garden should include a variety of plants, nectar for the adults, and plants that provide food for their offspring. You'll also need to provide water and shelter. Watch the video here: <https://kansashealthyyards.org/all-videos/video/butterfly-gardens>

## Upcoming Events

- *May 3<sup>rd</sup> at Noon- Drought Tolerant Plants for a Challenging Kansas Landscape*  
The Kansas climate throws numerous extremes at our landscape plants. The most common climate extreme is periods of drought, which are difficult for both plants and gardeners. Join Jason Graves, Central Kansas District Horticulture Extension Agent, and Matthew McKernan, Sedgwick County Horticulture Extension Agent, as they address our climate challenges and provide suggestions for drought tolerant plants that will make gardening easier. For more information on the Garden Hour series or to register visit here: <https://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/consumer-horticulture/garden-hour/>