

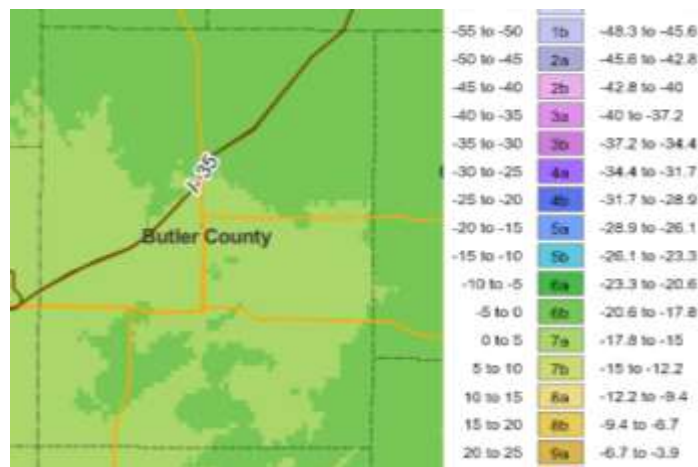
The Grapevine



Changes to the Plant Hardiness Zones

The USDA released a new Plant Hardiness Zone Map for the United States, the first update to this map since 2012. The 2023 map is based on 30-year averages of the lowest annual winter temperatures at specific locations, divided into 10-degree Fahrenheit zones and further divided into 5-degree Fahrenheit half-zones. The 2023 map incorporates data from 13,412 weather stations compared to the 7,983 used for the 2012 map. Plant hardiness zone designations represent what's known as the "average annual extreme minimum temperature" at a given location during a particular period (30 years, in this instance). Put another way, the designations do not reflect the coldest it has ever been or ever will be at a specific location, but simply the average lowest winter temperature over a specified time. Low temperature during the winter is a crucial factor in the survival of plants at specific locations.

What does that mean for gardeners in Butler County? In the 2012 version Plant Hardiness Zone Map, our county was divided into zones 6a and 6b. With the update to the map, the county is now in zones 6b and 7a. While El Dorado and the central part of the county stayed in the same zone, the northern and southern parts changed by a half-zone warmer. In general, this update means that we should be able to grow zone 7 plants that require a slightly warmer winter temperature, but I would consider them marginally hardy in our area. You may get away with those plants for a few years, but we may still get the odd winter with extremely cold temperatures. I do want to note that the map does not show microclimates. A microclimate is a local set of atmospheric conditions that differ from those in the surrounding areas, often slightly but sometimes substantially. The term may refer to areas as small as a few square yards or smaller to as large as many square miles. The interactive map may be found here: <https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/>





Winterizing Roses by Cynthia Domenghini

Although most shrub roses are hardy through Kansas winters, many hybrid teas and other modern varieties require protection. It is important to wait to winterize roses until several hard frosts have occurred, but before the ground freezes. Too early and the stem remains warm and moist; good conditions for cankers to develop. Too late risks damage to the sensitive graft union where the rootstalk attaches to the above-ground growth.

Clean up plant debris in the area surrounding the roses to prevent diseases from overwintering. Mound soil or compost eight to ten inches high around each rose plant. Bring in new soil for this rather than displacing soil from the area around the roses to avoid damaging the roots and exposing them to the cold.

Once the ground has frozen, add a 4-inch layer of straw, leaves, wood chips, or other mulch over the mound and cover it with a layer of soil to hold it

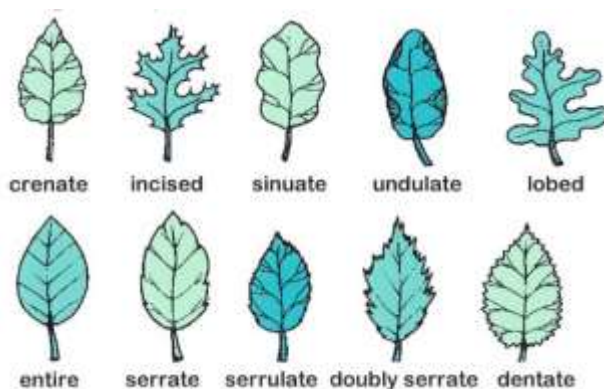
in place. This will help protect the plants from the cold but also prevent early budding during warm winter and early spring days. As the mulch settles during winter you may need to add more.

Prune canes to 36 inches and remove weak or thin canes. Tie the remaining canes together loosely to keep them secure during windy weather. If the canes are allowed to whip in the wind it can cause damage to the crown and disturb the soil. When the ground thaws in the spring remove the mulch and soil from the base of the plant to return the soil level to normal. For more information on winterizing roses check out this Kansas Healthy Yards Video:

<https://kansashealthyyards.org/all-videos/video/protecting-roses-for-the-winter>

Leaf Margins

One of the final aspects of a leaf that we can use to identify a plant is the leaf margin. The leaf margin refers to the structure or appearance of the edge of the leaf. Entire leaf margins are the simplest leaf margin as the leaf edge is smooth with no lobes or teeth. There are many different types of leaf margins, but some of the most common include lobed, serrate, incised, and dentate. Lobes on leaves are similar to big teeth that extend more than 1/4 of the way to the midvein. Serrated leaf edges are sharp and saw-like (think serrated knife). Incised leaf margins are similar to lobes but have deep, irregular teeth rather than rounded edges. Finally, the dentate leaf margin has square or rectangular teeth.



No Ashes in the Garden

There is a misconception that there are a lot of plant nutrients in wood ashes from the stove or fireplace so people will routinely add ashes to their garden. Wherever this notion came from, much like the Epsom salt myth, this old wives' tale should go away. Wood ashes can be a valuable source of calcium and potassium but have very little phosphorous and no nitrogen. Most of the soils in Butler County do not need calcium or potassium so adding ashes to the garden will not provide the nutrients the plants need. The biggest issue with wood ashes is that they raise the pH of the soil. Do not use wood ash if your soil pH is alkaline (more than 7.0). If you know from a soil test that your garden soil is acidic, then ashes can help to neutralize some of that acidity. Unfortunately, most of our soils have too high of a pH, and adding ashes makes it worse. Your best bet is to find somewhere other than your garden to dispose of the wood ashes from fireplaces.

Reminders-

- Spray for winter annuals such as henbit and chickweed along with dandelions in the lawn
- Plan out next year's vegetable garden so that crops are rotated
- Be sure lawn irrigation lines are drained
- Plant spring flowering bulbs
- Plant garlic

Video of the week: Decorating a Flowerpot for the Holidays

Decorating your front porch for the holidays can be as simple as adding some cuttings from your yard to your summer flowerpot. This segment demonstrates steps to creating a beautiful holiday accent for your home. Watch the video here:

<https://kansashealthyyards.org/all-videos/video/decorating-a-flowerpot-for-the-holidays>



Slow Cooker Harvest Apple Crisp

Ingredients

- 6 large gala apples
- ¾ cup brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon, divided
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 3 cups rolled oats
- ⅛ teaspoon salt
- 5 tablespoons butter

Directions:

1. After apples have been washed, core, slice, and place them into a large bowl. Top the apples with ½ cup brown sugar, 1 teaspoon cinnamon, and lemon juice. Toss to combine. Place the apple mixture in the bottom of the slow cooker. In the same large bowl, combine oats, remaining brown sugar, cinnamon, and salt. Stir until combined.
2. Cut the butter into the bowl and stir, forming a sand-like texture. There will be small chunks of butter, which is normal. Sprinkle the mixture on top of the apples. Turn the slow cooker on high and cook for 2 hours with the cover on. After 2 hours, remove the lid of the slow cooker and continue to cook for another hour. Serve with Greek yogurt or ice cream of your choosing. (Source: <https://www.ndsu.edu/agriculture/extension/recipes/slow-cooker-harvest-apple-crisp>)



Upcoming Events

- *December 1st at 11 am- Winter Feeding of Birds*
Feeding the birds is a popular activity with over 59 million people in the United States feeding birds for well over 100 years. Join us for this class to learn some tips about what food to feed, ways to attract more birds to your home, and some troubleshooting tips on why you aren't having birds at your feeders. This program is free at the Douglass Senior Center, 124 W 4th St, Douglass, KS 67039.
- *December 6th at Noon- Beekeeping Basics: How to Start Your Own Colony*
Beekeeping is both popular and important for many reasons. Whether it's to produce your own local honey, supplement pollination of nearby plants, promote conservation, or even personal entertainment, there are many reasons to become a beekeeper. Join Ryan Engel, Golden Prairie District Horticulture Extension Agent, as he covers the equipment you will need, how to source your bees, and what it takes to establish a new colony. This class is offered online via Zoom. For more information on the Garden Hour series or to register visit here: <https://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/consumer-horticulture/garden-hour/>
- *December 7th at 6 pm- Winter Feeding of Birds*
Feeding the birds is a popular activity with over 59 million people in the United States feeding birds for well over 100 years. Join us for this class to learn some tips about what food to feed, ways to attract more birds to your home, and some troubleshooting tips on why you aren't having birds at your feeders. This program is free at the Bradford Memorial Library, 611 S Washington St. El Dorado, KS.

Don't miss an issue. Sign up to receive the Grapevine directly to your email- <https://forms.gle/qQJo4fBFLET9pGSh7>

To view previous issues, visit our website: https://www.butler.k-state.edu/horticulture/2023_grapevine/untitled.html

Calla Edwards- KSRE Horticulture Agent
206 N Griffith St. El Dorado, KS 67042
316-321-9660
callae@ksu.edu

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