

The Grapevine

The right tree for your yard

One of my favorite sayings growing up was “The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second-best time is today”. Trees can enhance the beauty of your home, increase the value and make your yard an enjoyable place to be by providing shade, blooms and color to an area. However, the wrong tree in the wrong place can damage your property and become an issue rather than an asset. Most issues with trees that I see could have been prevented with a little bit of planning and a few simple questions.

My first question when someone asks what tree they should plant is always, what is the purpose of the tree? What someone wants from their tree is going to impact my answer and my recommendation of what to plant and where to plant it. Trees can provide shade, blooms, color, serve as a windbreak, a home for wildlife, the uses really are endless but there is not one tree that can provide all of those items. Having an idea what you want your tree to do will drastically narrow down the options. Last year I was looking to add a tree to my front yard to eventually replace the Sweet Gum that is currently growing there. I wanted a shade tree that will also have some fall color and does not have large seeds. I do like my Sweet Gum, but the seeds are a pain. I don't need a tree that will be fast growing because this is a long-term project but I don't necessarily want one that is going to be extremely slow growing. For my yard I chose to go with a John Pair Sugar Maple for a couple reasons. It was developed in Kansas so I know it tolerates our conditions, it has beautiful fall color and it is a sturdy tree that also grows fairly quickly. Know what you want out of a tree before you buy one.



One of the most important and often overlooked parts of planting a tree is picking the right place. All too often I see large trees planted less than 10' from a house or building and the homeowner wants to know how to keep it small or the roots are causing issues with the foundation and they want to know how to solve the problem. The biggest mistake most homeowners make when planting a tree is failing to allow enough room for growth. A large tree should be at least 20' away from a house to allow it enough room as it grows during its lifetime while still providing shade for the house. Along with planting trees too close to a house, we often plant trees too close together. Trees are free spirits, give them room to grow. If the tag says a tree will get 40 feet across you should plant the next tree at least 50 feet away. That gives each tree approximately 20' to grow toward each other and a little bit extra because let's be honest, trees don't read their tags and many will outgrow what the tag says in its lifetime.

My final question when picking a tree species is what is your yard like? Is your soil shallow, the yard rocky, does part of the yard hold water or does the area drain well? All of those questions factor into the type of tree you pick. If your yard tends to be slow draining, a Blue Spruce is not the right tree for you because they will drown. On the other side of the coin if your yard is rocky and has sandy soil a Willow tree is not going to be happy unless you water it constantly. It's important to know the limitations of your yard (moisture, soil type, overhead power lines, utilities, etc) before selecting a tree to reduce your chances of having issues down the road. I will also recommend you pick a tree that works in Kansas. There are some gorgeous trees out there but if they don't like our weather extremes, clay soils or wind it's not the right tree for you.

As you select a tree, be sure to research what are some of the potential issues that tree could have. Silver Maples are fast growing and great shade trees, but they are also weaker because they are fast growing and often lose small branches during wind storms. American Elm trees are a semi fast growing tree that is very sturdy and long lived but you do have to contend with Dutch Elm disease. There is unfortunately no perfect tree out there but with a little bit of research and some planning you can find the tree that will be perfect for you and your yard this growing season. If you are having issue picking a tree give our office a call and we can give you some recommendations that will work for your situation. Happy Growing everyone!!!

Weed of the Week- Wild Garlic



The weed for this week is Wild Garlic. This weed is a common lawn weed that is native to Europe, Africa and the Middle east but has naturalized through much of the world. They are related to the garlic we grow in our garden is are a bulbous perennial. Wild garlic form grass-like clumps of leaves topped with scapes (the flower bud) which appear in the late spring through early summer. The scape will have a number of small bulbils and a few or no flowers. The leaves look similar to grass and can often be missed until you smell the onion odor after mowing the lawn. Wild garlic can be found in disturbed areas, meadows, thickets and lawns spreading by seeds, area bulbils and bulb offsets below the

ground. It is a cool season perennial that emerges in the fall through the winter, creates the bulbils in the spring then goes dormant through the heat of the summer only to come back up in the fall. The leaves, flowers and bulbs are edible and can be used similar to chives however there are better options to grow in your garden that are less aggressive in spreading. Once Wild Garlic is established it is difficult to manage it with only mechanical measures and it is also resistant to pre-emergent herbicides. The best way to establish control is through a combination of mowing and post emergent chemical application. While active ingredients such as 2,4-D, dicamba, MCPP, quiclorac and others can provide some control it's best to use a product that contains multiple active ingredients such as Trimec, Ortho Weed B Gon, Ferti-lome Weed-Out Lawn Weed Killer and Bonide Weed Killer for the best control. Spray in the fall when the plants are first coming up for the year rather than in the spring or heat of summer when they are going dormant and control will be difficult.

Plant of the Week- Crabapple

Crabapples are one of my favorite spring blooming tree. This week's plant is closely related to apples but they have a smaller edible fruit and offer a wide variety of different bloom colors, sizes, shapes and leaf colors. Crabapples tend to bloom in April through May depending on the variety and the spring weather. One thing I love about crabapples is their versatility in bloom color and shape. Do you need a tree for a small space, one that is tall and slender, or one that has a weeping form? There is a crabapple variety that will work in that location. Bloom color ranges from white to pink to purple to red and can be single, semi-double or double blooms. The fruit on crabapples is edible, on some varieties can be showy and the larger fruited varieties are often used for making jams and jellies. Crabapple leaves range from green to dark purple to bronze in color and some varieties have showy red or yellow foliage in the fall giving crabapples several seasons of interest. Crabapples do have a few disease issues in fireblight and cedar apple rust. But overall they are fairly healthy and issue free. If you are looking for a spring blooming tree to replace your pear consider throwing a crabapple into the mix.



Issue of the Week- Drought Damage

While parts of the county saw some rain over the weekend we unfortunately are still in drought conditions which don't look to end anytime soon. With the prolonged drought that started in the fall of 2021 we are really starting to see some major issues across the county in terms of drought damage to lawns, trees and shrubs. Evergreens unfortunately seem to be bearing the brunt of the issue as they are prone to winter damage and desiccation caused by dry conditions, the sun and wind in the winter. Cool season lawns are also starting to show some stress from the dry conditions. If you have not already considered watering your lawn every couple weeks, when we haven't had rain, now would be the time to start thinking about watering your lawn deeply and infrequently to help it through this dry spell. Trees and shrubs that have been planted in the last couple years should also be watered every couple of weeks if we continue to have a dry spell. One of the easiest ways to water a tree is to put small holes in a 5 gallon bucket and place it near the tree to slowly drip out over a period of time. Just watering the lawn will most likely not be enough for the trees unless you water for an extended period of time.

Reminders-

- Apply preemergent herbicide to lawn if you haven't already
- 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: Tree Selection Tips

Trees can enhance the value of your home, and provide a lifetime of enjoyment. However, there are many things to consider when planting a tree; such as type, shape, mature height, and cold hardiness. Watch the video here: <https://kansashealthyyards.org/all-videos/video/tree-selection-tips>

Upcoming Events

- *April 22nd from 9-5 and April 23rd from noon to 5- Grow and Bloom in Butler Lawn and Garden show*
The Butler County Master Gardeners in an effort to promote horticultural activities and to provide educational opportunities are hosting our first Lawn and Garden Show in Butler County. The show will be held at the Butler County Community/4-H Building located at 206 N Griffith St, El Dorado, KS. This event will feature businesses from around the area in our vendor show along with expert speakers both from the area and across the state. Check out our website for more information: <https://www.butler.k-state.edu/horticulture/show/Butlerlawnandgardenshow.html>
- *May 3rd 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/>