THE GRAPEVINE **FOR RELEASE: August 23rd, 2018**

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FERTILIZING LAWNS

Give Cool-Season Grasses a Boost

September is almost here and that means it is prime time to fertilize your tall fescue or Kentucky bluegrass lawns. If you could only fertilize your cool-season grasses once per year, this would be the best time to do it. These grasses are entering their fall growth cycle as days shorten and temperatures moderate (especially at night). Cool-season grasses naturally thicken up in the fall by tillering (forming new shoots at the base of existing plants) and, for bluegrass, spreading by underground stems called rhizomes. Consequently, September is the most important time to fertilize these grasses. Apply 1 to 1.5 pounds of actual nitrogen per 1,000 square feet. The settings recommended on lawn fertilizer bags usually result in about 1 pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet. We recommend a quick-release source of nitrogen at this time. Most fertilizers sold in garden centers and department stores contain either quick-release nitrogen or a mixture of quick- and slow-release. Usually only lawn fertilizers recommended for summer use contain slow-release nitrogen. Any of the others should be quick-release. The second most important fertilization of cool-season grasses also occurs during the fall. A November fertilizer application will help the grass green up earlier next spring and provide the nutrients needed until summer. It also should be quick-release applied at the rate of 1-pound actual nitrogen per 1,000 square feet.

Dividing Daylilies

Daylilies need to be divided every three to four years to maintain vigor. Though they may be divided in early spring before growth starts, it is more common to divide them at this time of year. Many gardeners cut back the tops to about half their original height to make plants easier to handle. Daylilies have a very tough root system that can make them difficult to divide while in place. Dividing in place is practical if it hasn't been long since the last division. In such cases, a spading fork can be used to peel fans from the existing clump. If the plants have been in place longer and are well grown together, it is more practical to divide them after the entire clump has been dug. Use a spade to lift the entire clump out of the ground. Although it is possible to cut the clump apart with a sharp spade, you'll save more roots by using two spading forks back-to-back to divide the clump into sections. Each section should be about the size of a head of cauliflower. An easier method involves using a stream of water from a garden hose to wash the soil from the clump, and then rolling the clump back and forth until the individual divisions separate. Space divisions 24 to 30 inches apart, and set each at its original depth. The number of flowers will be reduced the first year but will return to normal until the plants need to be divided again.

Are Crabapples Safe to Eat?

Crabapples are safe to consume as long as you don't eat too many of them. Actually, the only difference between crabapples and apples is the size of the fruit. By definition, crabapples have fruit that are 2 inches or less in diameter, and apples are more than 2 inches in diameter. By this definition, most of the apples grown from seed will be crabapples. The fruiting apples are grafted. So, did people ever plant crabapples from seed? Of course they did. Just think of Johnny Appleseed. But those apples were normally used for jelly, applesauce, and cider and not for fresh eating. There is one other caveat with using crabapples from a tree in the landscape. Make sure the tree hasn't been sprayed as an ornamental with a pesticide that isn't labeled for fruit tree apples. If it has, then the fruit should not be used.

New Fruit Pest Control Publications

We have three new fruit pest control publications available. They are:

Spray Schedules for Growing Apples: MF 3429

Spray Schedules for Growing Stone Fruit: MF 3430

Fruit Pesticides, Active Ingredients, and Labeled Fruits: MF3431

The two spray schedules are designed to give good, but not perfect results. Seeking perfect results would require a more intensive and expensive spray schedule. Photos of growth stages are included to help properly time sprays. Also included are images of common problems.

The third publication, MF 3431, is intended to be used in conjunction with the other two publications. It provides trade names for the products mentioned in the other two pubs as well as days to harvest, maximum applications per year and the days to harvest. It was kept separate as it will require updating more frequently than the two spray schedule publications.

Correcting Iron Chlorosis in Trees

Iron chlorosis is a common problem in Kansas because of the high pH in some soils. Though these soils normally contain adequate amounts of iron, the high pH ties up iron so that it is unavailable to plants. Classic symptoms of iron chlorosis are yellow leaves with a network of dark green veins. In severe cases the entire leaf turns yellow and the edges of the leaf scorch and turn brown. Plants may eventually die. One of the best methods of avoiding iron chlorosis is by planting tolerant trees. Trees that are susceptible to iron chlorosis include pin oak, sweetgum, silver and red maples, river birch and dawn redwood. Moderately tolerant trees are ash, cottonwood, linden, elm, hawthorn, most oaks and ginkgo. Even closely related trees can differ markedly in their resistance. For example, pin oak is notorious for sensitivity to iron chlorosis while most other oaks are moderately tolerant. Also, red, silver and Amur maples are susceptible, but Norway maples are much less so. Several methods are used to correct iron chlorosis in trees. Not all methods work in all situations. The following is what I recommend.

Soil treatment for existing trees: At the drip line dig a 6 inch hole that is 6 inches around (basically a 6" X 6" X 6" plug. In the hole place 1 cup of Iron sulfate and on top of that place 1 cup of Sulfur, then replace the soil and water it in good. Do this every 5 or 6 feet around the tree at the dripline. If a sidewalk or driveway gets in the way then place the holes as far out as possible. This is best done in the spring before growth starts. If it is done during the growing season you will see some improvement that year, but the following year the foliage should be symptom free. This method has worked for my recommendations about 99% of the time. If it doesn't work you will probably need to try a trunk injection. Trunk injections should only be done by qualified people. If it is done wrong it can lead to trunk rot and trunk failure. For this reason I steer people away from them unless nothing else works.