

Kansas State University Cooperative Extension Office  
206 N. Griffith, Suite A  
El Dorado, Kansas 67042

## THE GRAPEVINE



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Larry Crouse  
Extension Horticulture Agent

### HENBIT AND CHICKWEED IN LAWNS

The plant with the little purple flowers that have been showing up in home lawns is called henbit. If you are not sure this is what you have, check the stems. If they are square rather than round, you have henbit. A plant that also is low growing but has round stems and tiny white flowers is chickweed. Both these plants are winter annuals and start to grow in the fall.

They spend the winter as small plants and so most people do not pay much attention to them until they start to flower in the spring. Trying to kill either one at this late stage with a herbicide usually is a waste of time and money. Though plants may be burned back, they will rarely be killed. So what should you do? Remember, these are winter annuals that will die as soon as the weather turns hot. Keep the lawn mowed until nature takes its course. However, you can do something next fall that will help next spring. Henbit and chickweed usually germinate about mid-October. Spraying with 2,4-D, Weed-B-Gon, Weed Free Zone, Weed Out, or Trimec in late October to early November can go a long way toward eliminating these plants as they are small and relatively easy to control. Choose a day that is at least 50 degrees F. These herbicides will work at temperatures below 50 degrees but the weeds are killed at a slower rate. Spot treating will probably be needed in the spring (March) to catch the few plants that germinate late. Use Weed Free Zone, Speed Zone, Weed Out, Weed-B-Gon, Trimec, or one of the special henbit herbicides early in the spring before they have put on much growth.

### *Getting Healthy with Herbs*

Learn how to grow and use them!!!

On Tuesday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, at 6:30 PM in the Andover Central Park Lodge at Andover Central Park in Andover, KS we will be presenting our annual Herb Program. Kay Neff, owner of Neff Family Farms, will share her vast knowledge of all things herbal. Kay will not only be giving tips on what herbs grow here and how to grow them, she will also be sharing recipes and have a good selection of herbs for sale for those in attendance.

Barb Roths, Butler County Family and Consumer Science Agent, and her volunteers will be preparing different items that are relatively easy to make. So before, during and after the program people will be able to taste the different offerings to see what might interest them.

We are asking that you please pre-register for this event, this will help insure that we have enough materials for all attending. The cost to attend is \$5.00 per person, and the registration deadline is Friday, April 26<sup>th</sup>. To register, come by or call the Butler County Extension office at (316) 321-9660. Or you can e-mail the Butler County Extension office using [aperry1@ksu.edu](mailto:aperry1@ksu.edu). Put "Herbs" in the subject line and include your name and phone number in the body of the e-mail. So please come and join us for information on buying, growing, preserving, using and cooking with herbs!

### *Fruit on Ornamental (Bradford) Pears*

The fruit on ornamental pears is quite small; about the size of a marble. However, it can be very messy if it lands on sidewalks or driveways and people squish the fruit when walking or driving. You may have noticed that ornamental pears are producing fruit much more commonly than they have in

the past. Why is this so? A little history is needed in order to understand what has happened. Ornamental pears used to be called Bradford pears. This was a bit of a misnomer as 'Bradford' was a specific variety. Ornamental pears were called Bradfords because this was practically the only variety that people planted. Therefore, if you bought an ornamental pear a number of years ago, it was likely a Bradford. All was well and good until people noticed that Bradfords would fall apart after a number of years due to a weak branching structure. Therefore, nurseries started selling "improved" ornamental pears that were not Bradfords such as 'Aristocrat', 'Capital', 'Redspire', 'Chanticleer' and various other varieties. It was felt that all of these varieties had a stronger branching pattern than 'Bradford' but such may not be the case. Both 'Chanticleer' and 'Redspire' have shown branch breakage. 'Aristocrat' does appear to have better branch angles but more time is needed to make a firm recommendation. Here is the key. Pears usually require cross-pollination in order to fruit. In other words, you must have two different varieties of pear before fruit forms. When all we had were Bradfords, we had no fruit due to a lack of cross-pollination. Now that we have such a mixture of varieties, we will get fruit as long as two different varieties of ornamental pears bloom at the same time and are close enough that bees can work between them. This formation of fruit can also lead to a second problem. Volunteer trees can come up from the seed contained in the fruit. Therefore, you may see ornamental pears come up in areas where no one planted them. This has become enough of a problem that several states have added ornamental pears to their invasive plant list. There are products that are sold as fruit preventers such as Florel but timing and air temperature are critical and results have been mixed.

### *Controlling Grassy Weeds in Broadleaf Plants*

Most gardeners are familiar with herbicides that can be used to eliminate broadleaves from grasses (i.e. dandelions from lawns). However, gardeners may not be as familiar with herbicides that can take grasses out of broadleaf plants like shrubs. There are two major weed killer types labeled for homeowners that are used to kill grassy weeds in broadleaf plants. On the commercial side, the trade names for these products are Fusilade and Poast. Homeowner labeling is more diverse. I have seen Fusilade sold under the names of Ortho "Grass-B-Gon". Poast is sometimes sold to homeowners under the Poast label but I've seen it more commonly sold as "Bonide Grass Beater", "Fertilome Over the Top II Grass Killer", "Hi-Yield Grass Killer" and "Monterey Grass Getter." There may be other trade names, too. Fortunately, you can identify the product by the common chemical name listed on the label. Fusilade's common chemical name is fluazifop, and Poast's is sethoxydim. If you decide to use one of these products, read the label carefully. Often, a crop oil must be added to the spray solution for the herbicide to work well. Some grassy weeds are not controlled such as bromegrass and sandbur. Mature tall fescue also is not controlled though seedling tall fescue is. Established bermudagrass is knocked back but rarely killed. Though both these products can be used over the top of numerous broadleaf plants (including iris), there are some differences in labeling. For example, if you need to control grasses in vegetables, choose Poast as Fusilade is not labeled for vegetables. However, Poast products cannot be used on all vegetables and the waiting period between spraying and harvest may be so long as to make use impractical. To see a label for a product that contain sethoxydim, see Hi-Yield Grass Killer

Larry E. Crouse  
Butler County Horticulture Agent  
K-State Research & Extension  
206 N Griffith, Suite A  
El Dorado, KS 67042  
(316)321-9660  
[lcrouse@ksu.edu](mailto:lcrouse@ksu.edu)