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THE GRAPEVINE



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CONSERVATION TREES FROM KANSAS FOREST SERVICE

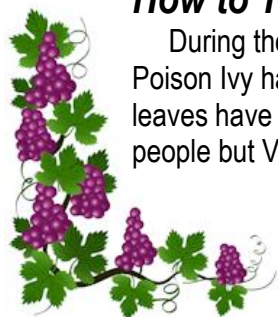
The Kansas Forest Service offers low-cost tree and shrub seedlings for use in conservation plantings. Plants are one to two years old and sizes vary from 8 to 18 inches, depending on species. Two types of seedlings are offered; bareroot and containerized. Containerized provide a higher survival rate and quicker establishment. Orders are accepted from now through May 1st, but order early to ensure receiving the items you want. Orders are shipped beginning in mid-March. Approved uses for these plants include windbreaks, wood lots, wildlife habitat, timber plantations and educational and riparian (streambank) plantings. They may not be used for landscape (ornamental) plantings or grown for resale. All items are sold in units. Each single species unit consists of 25 plants. For example, a unit of Eastern red cedar has 25 trees per unit. Though a single species unit is most commonly purchased, four special bundles are also available including a quail bundle, pheasant bundle, eastern pollinator bundle and western pollinator bundle. Tree planting accessories are also available including marking flags, root protective slurry, rabbit protective tubes, weed barrier fabric and tree tubes. If there have been problems with deer browsing on young trees, the tree tubes are a must.

For details and an order form, go to: <http://kfs.mybigcommerce.com/>


Caddo Sugar Maples

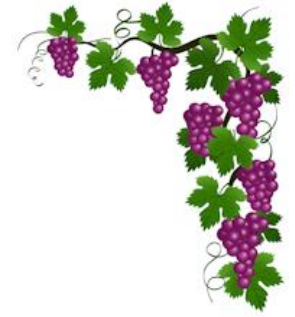
Sugar maples often have significant problems with our Kansas weather. Our hot, often dry summers and windy conditions can shorten the life of these trees. However, some sugar maples are better adapted to Kansas conditions than others. Our John C. Pair Horticulture Center has evaluated sugar maples for well over 20 years and has identified selections that are much better adapted to Kansas. Of particular interest are the Caddo sugar maples which originated from an isolated population in Caddo, County, Oklahoma. These are true sugar maples and are considered an ecotype and are more drought tolerant, better adapted to high pH soils and more resistant to leaf scorch and tatter than the norm. Just how resistant to scorch is impressive. The last three weeks of August in 2003 saw temperatures at our research station over 100 degrees each day with no rain for the month prior. All other sugar maples in the trial had severely scorched leaves. Not a single leaf of any of the Caddo maples was scorched. Leaf water potential readings taken pre-dawn showed all other trees in the trial past the wilting point while the Caddo maples were barely stressed. Another interesting characteristic of Caddo maples is that they tend to retain their leaves in the winter and therefore have been suggested as screens or for use in windbreaks. Dr. John Pair, the late director of the Horticulture Center, selected and released two Caddo maples over 10 years ago. Both these selections color early and have consistent good red fall color. Drought tolerance and resistance to leaf scorch and leaf tatter are exceptional. However, neither will do well in a heavy clay soil that is frequently saturated. These trees can be damaged or killed if planted in wet sites. The first selection, '***Autumn Splendor***', has the traditional sugar maple growth pattern and needs plenty of room to mature. '***John Pair***' is smaller and more compact and more likely to fit a residential landscape. This tree is also noted for a dense, uniform crown. Flashfire is a third Caddo maple that has done well in Kansas. If you are in the market for a sugar maple, consider these before making a final decision.

How to Tell Poison Ivy and Virginia Creeper Apart in the Winter



During the growing season, these plants are easy to tell apart as Virginia Creeper has five-leaflets per leaf and Poison Ivy has three. However, during the winter, distinguishing between the two vines can be more difficult as the leaves have dropped. The reason it is important to be able to tell the difference is that Poison Ivy causes a rash in most people but Virginia Creeper does not. First, let's cover some facts about Poison Ivy.





- Urushiol is the oil present in Poison Ivy that causes the rash.
- Urushiol is present in all parts of the plant but especially in the sap.
- Urushiol can cause a rash from 1 to 5 years after a plant has died.
- The amount of urushiol that covers the head of a pin can cause a rash in 500 people.
- Poison Ivy can grow as a ground cover, a shrub or a vine.
- Using a chainsaw on Poison Ivy in the winter can release sap which makes a rash more likely. This is worse on warm days where there is more sap rise.

So, how do you tell the two apart? This is actually easy once you know what to check. Look at the aerial roots on the vines of Poison Ivy and Virginia Creeper. They resemble hairs on Poison Ivy but are plumper on Virginia Creeper and are about the size of a pencil lead.

Newer Lights Available for Indoor Gardeners

Many gardeners use fluorescent lights to start young vegetable and flower plants during the spring or to grow certain houseplants all year long. In the past, we used fixtures with T-12 lamps suspended a few inches above the tops of the plants. However, T-12 lamps are fading away due to newer lamps that are a better choice for indoor gardens. These are known as T-8 and T-5 lamps. The number after the "T" refers to the diameter of the lamp in eighths of an inch. Therefore, a T-12 lamp is 12/8 or 1.5 inches in diameter and are what most people with older fixtures are familiar with. A T-8 is 8/8 or 1 inch in diameter, and a T-5 is 5/8 of an inch in diameter. So, does a smaller diameter mean less light? Not at all. In fact, the T-5 can be the brightest of the three. Another advantage for these newer lamps is they use less electricity per lumen. The traditional 48-inch T-12 is rated at 40 watts. However, there are newer styles of T-12's that are 34 watts. The T-8 is rated at 32 watts and the T-5 at 28 watts. This sounds too good to be true. Are there drawbacks? Maybe so or maybe not. First is cost if you have to replace T-12 fixtures to convert to a T-8 system. However, newer fixtures may be able to handle either T-12's or T-8's. Therefore, if you purchased fluorescent fixtures in the last few years, check to see if they are rated for T-8's before replacing them. Note that lamp costs are comparable between T-12's and T-8's. The T-5 lamps may be more expensive so check prices before converting.

The question becomes, is it worth it? If you have a T-12 fixture that is rated for T-12's only and are satisfied with your results, then maybe not. However, if you are investing in new fixtures or have fixtures that can use either T-12's or T-8's, then go with the T-8's. They will use less energy, last longer and provide more light. Prices for T-5's have been dropping so you may want to consider them as well. The newest technology is LED lighting. LED's have several advantages over other types of lighting including energy efficiency, durability, long life, a cool running temperature and more latitude in choosing specific wavelengths of light. Traditionally, they have been very expensive but costs are dropping rapidly. We are starting to use LED's as supplemental lighting in the University greenhouses but would suggest only using them on a trial basis at home until you see how they perform for you. Be sure to choose LED "Grow Lights" as they are richer in the wavelengths of light plants actually use.

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