



Rice County

K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION NEWS

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AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES
HOME AND FAMILY

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Moving Houseplants Inside for the Winter

Many people with houseplants move some of them outside for the summer to give them better growing conditions and help them recover from the stress of an indoor environment. If the plants haven't been brought inside yet, now would be a good time as many areas of Kansas had night temperatures in the 40's last week. Plants that have spent the summer outside should be inspected for insects and disease before bringing them inside. A sharp spray from a garden hose can remove insects or mites from houseplant foliage. Insects in the potting soil can be forced out by soaking the pot in a tub of lukewarm water for about 15 minutes.

Houseplants that have been kept outdoors are accustomed to receiving much more sunlight than they do indoors. So how do we help houseplants acclimatize to the lower light levels inside? Houseplants brought in from outside should be started out in an area of the home that receives plenty of light, and then gradually moved to their permanent, darker location. This process should take four to eight weeks depending on the degree of difference in light levels between the initial and final location of the plant.

Understanding plant processes allows us to anticipate potential problems. Acclimatization gives houseplants a greater chance of retaining leaves and avoiding the stress of completely replacing them.

Reblooming Poinsettias

If you have saved last year's poinsettia and want it to flower again this year, you must follow certain procedures. Poinsettias are known as "short-day" plants. Growers found out long ago that poinsettias can be brought into bloom if they are given short days and long nights.

Originally, it was thought that short-day plants needed a short duration of daylight in order to flower. Now we know that flower formation is actually triggered by long periods of uninterrupted darkness. For poinsettia, at least 12 hours of each 24 must be uninterrupted dark. Night temperature also has an effect and should be below 70 degrees F with 60 to 65 degrees F preferred.

During the day, place the plants in the sunniest location of the house. This high level of light is needed for the plants to have the energy required for good bract coloration. Day temperatures should range between 65 and 75 degrees F.

Providing uninterrupted darkness can be a problem for gardeners unless there is a room in which the lights are never turned on. If you don't have such a room, place your poinsettia in a dark closet or cover it with a cardboard box each night for the required 12 hours. If using a cardboard box, tape all the seams with duct tape to cut off any light. Poinsettia takes anywhere between eight and 11 weeks to flower once the dark treatment has been started. Normally, people start the dark treatment in late September to early October. The first six weeks are critical as this triggers the plant to bloom. The remaining time is needed for flowers to develop. For every night you miss during the first six weeks, add two days to the bloom time.

After the six-week dark treatment, the buds have set and the dark treatment is no longer needed.

Don't Forget to Order Trees!

The Kansas Forest Service Conservation Tree and Shrub sale opens Sept. 1, providing landown-

ers with a source for low-cost tree and shrub seedlings.

Conservation plantings may function as wildlife habitat, windbreaks, wood lots, timber plantations, or educational and riparian (streambank) plantings.

Many native and a few non-native species are offered through the conservation program that will thrive in Kansas and surrounding states.

Planting trees and shrubs in the fall presents several benefits over spring plantings, including less pressure from insects, disease and weeds. Additionally, seedlings planted in the fall have lower moisture demands than spring plantings and soils are typically drier in the fall as compared to wet or saturated soils in the spring, which restrict field preparation and planting activities, according to Yoder.

In addition to the new out-of-state shipping limitations, all orders placed in the program must be shipped. The change to a shipping-only policy ensures the safety of KFS staff, their families and the public as the program continues to operate during the COVID19 pandemic.

Water Landscape Plants Before Winter

Though this summer was exceptionally wet, recently we have had dry weather for much of Kansas. Watering now is important if soils are dry to help alleviate moisture stress. A good, deep watering with moisture reaching at least a foot down into the soil is much better than several light sprinklings that just wet the top portions of the soil.

A deep watering will help ensure that the majority of roots have access to water. Regardless of the watering method used, soil should be wet at least 12 inches deep. Use a metal rod, wooden dowel, electric fence post or something similar to check depth.

Although all perennial plants benefit from moist soils before winter, it is especially important for newly planted trees and shrubs due to limited root systems. Even trees and shrubs planted within the last 2 to 3 years are more sensitive to drought than a well established plant. Evergreens are also more at

risk because moisture is lost from the foliage.

Trees or shrubs planted within the last year can be watered inexpensively with a 5-gallon bucket. Drill a small hole (1/8") in the side of the bucket near the bottom. Fill the bucket and let the water dribble out slowly next to the tree. Refill the bucket once more, and you have applied 10 gallons. Very large transplanted trees and trees that were transplanted two to three years ago will require more water.

A perforated soaker hose is a good way to water a newly established bed or foundation plantings. However, soaker hoses are notorious for non-uniform watering. In other words, you often receive too much water from one part of the hose and not enough from another. Hooking both the beginning and the end of the soaker hose to a Y-adaptor helps equalize the pressure and therefore provide a more uniform watering. On larger trees, the soaker hose can circle the trunk at a distance within the dripline of the tree but at least 1/2 the distance to the dripline. The dripline of the tree is outermost reach of the branches. On smaller trees, you may circle the tree several times so that only soil which has tree roots will be watered.

If using a soaker hose, note the time watering was started. Check frequently to determine the amount of time it takes for water to reach 12 inches. From then on, you can water "by the clock." Use a kitchen oven timer so you remember to move the hose or shut off the faucet. If you are seeing surface runoff, reduce the flow, or build a berm with at least a 4-foot diameter around the base of the tree to allow the water to percolate down through the soil, instead of spreading out .

Cicada Killer...Not The Asian Giant Hornet



We are receiving inquiries regarding large wasps flying around. These are the Eastern cicada killer

(*Sphecius speciosus*); not the Asian Giant Hornet (*Vespa mandarina*). Cicada killer females search for, kill, and provision each cell within a nest located in the ground with a dog day cicada (*Tibicen pruinosus*) adult. The dead cicada is a food source for young cicada killer larvae. Cicada killers are an urban nuisance pest, especially when nesting in large numbers, in bare areas, in turfgrass, or around a structure. People are generally concerned because cicada killers resemble giant yellow jackets or they think cicada killers are the Asian giant hornet.

Cicada killers are approximately 2.0 inches long and black with yellow-banded markings on the abdomen. The head and transparent wings are red-brown. Cicada killers are not dangerous, but they are intimidating; especially the males. Cicada killers are ground-nesting solitary wasps, with the female digging a 6 to 10-inch burrow (1/2 inch in diameter) in the ground; usually in sandy or loose soil. A pile of sand or soil, depending on soil type, will surround the entrance. Females search for and sting large insects such as a cicada or katydid, and then bring the immobilized or paralyzed prey back to the burrow.

The female places prey into a chamber in the nest and then lays an egg on the body. Afterward, the female covers the burrow, digs another burrow, and repeats the process. A legless grub-like larva will emerge (eclose) from the egg and proceed to consume the prey. Full-grown larvae overwinter in the burrow, pupate in spring, and emerge as adults from July through August.

Male cicada killers establish aerial territories and patrol for intruders. A male cicada killer wards off other males that enter his territory and attempt to mate with females. An individual that walks into the territory is typically confronted by a very large wasp hovering in front of the face and 'zips' to the side and back. However, after determining that the intruder is not a rival or a threat, the male cicada killer ignores the individual. Nevertheless, an individual walking across a lawn, fairway, or other area where cicada killers are nesting, will experience the same treatment through each male's territory. After females have left the nest then males will eventual-

ly leave.

Cicada killers, in general, will not sting an individual. Wasp and bee stingers are modified egg laying devices (ovipositors), so males cannot sting. Females, however, may sting if crushed or if stepped on with bare feet, or grabbed with bare hands.

Cicada killers are common in areas with bare soil, so mulching, planting ground covers, or sodding may reduce issues with cicada killers. Cicada killers can be a problem in well maintained areas such as irrigated and regularly fertilized turfgrass. In addition, cicada killers can be a problem when nesting in areas accessible to or frequented by the public. Applying carbaryl or pyrethroid insecticides containing the active ingredients; permethrin, bifenthrin, cyfluthrin, and/or lambda-cyhalothrin to the burrowed area will kill females in golf course sand traps. In home yards, sandboxes should be covered with a tarp when not in use to deter cicada killers. Sand below swings, jungle gyms, or other playground equipment should be replaced with bark mulch or shredded tires.

Managing cicada killers in baseball infields and volleyball courts is more challenging because people with minimal clothing and exposed skin are diving and sliding onto the ground; thus making it difficult to recommend using an insecticide. However, in the case of a volleyball court, a geotextile fabric placed beneath the sand may create a barrier that prevents cicada killers from creating burrows.

An Itchy Situation, Managing Lice in our Cattle Herds

Cattle lice infections can affect the health and performance of our cows, stockers, and feedlot cattle during the winter months. These months generally range from December through March. The USDA has estimated that livestock producers lose up to \$125 million per year due to effects of lice infestations. Not only can they be the cause of direct animal performance losses, but also increases wear and tear on our facilities and fences. The direct losses to cattle come in forms of decreased average daily gains (documented 0.25 lbs/day reduction in growing calves), skin infections, and potentially blood loss and anemia.

There are two different types of lice that infect cattle. Biting lice feed on the skin and secretions on the outside of the animal. The other type is known as sucking lice. These species are blood feeders and pierce the skin. Both types of lice spend their entire lifecycles on the cattle hosts. Off of cattle they survive very poorly and generally only last a few days, but can live up to 10 days off host in the right environment leading to reinfection in groups of animals. It is important to note that lice are host species specific. This means that cattle lice cannot affect people, horses, or any other species.



In general, every herd has some level of lice infestation. Lice are carried from season to season by a small percentage of the herd that act as reservoir hosts. Adults lay eggs on the hair of infected animals. Overall lifecycle for an egg to mature into an adult, and lay eggs is roughly 28 days. Most females lay 1 egg per day.

Clinical signs of lice infected cattle generally begin with constant rubbing and scratching within the herd. Fences, posts, water troughs, trees and any other stationary object could be subject to damage from this rubbing. As the infection and irritation continues, large hairless patches will become evident on animals. Further diagnosing the issue beyond the clinical signs requires seeing the adult lice on the skin. Parting the hair will reveal the lice. They are very small but can still be seen. They are roughly the size of a grain of sand. The economic threshold for treatment is roughly 10 lice/square inch.

There are several options when it comes to treatment of lice in our cowherds. One option is the macrocyclic lactone class of endectocides. Examples of products in this class include ivermectin, doramectin, eprinomectin, and moxidectin. These products come in pour-on formulations

and injectable formulations. Macrocyclic lactones treat internal intestinal nematodes, but also work on external parasites such as lice. It is important to note that the injectable formulations do not work on biting lice since they do not blood feed. These products are most often used on a herd basis at the end of summer grazing going into winter. Even with herd treatment in the fall, later season lice infections can still occur. This can be due to fence line contact with other animals, or introduction of new animals.

The other option is topical treatments that are non-systemic. These products are typically pyrethroid products similar to what is commonly used to control horn flies during the summer months. These products are very effective against the adult lice, but do not affect the larvae or eggs. Retreatment is often indicated 14 days after initial treatment. There is a product available that is a pyrethroid in combination with an IGR (insect growth regulator) that not only works very well against the adults, but also works against the eggs and larvae. Use of this particular product eliminates the need to retreat in 14 days. Since these topical formulations kill lice by contact, it is extremely important to apply them appropriately to cattle. Most formulations call for the pour-on to be applied with full coverage on the topline of animals, from poll to the trailhead.

When treating cattle, it is also important to treat the entire group. Missing one animal could serve as the reservoir for reinvesting the entire herd. The same thought should be given to new additions to the herd from an outside source. Basic biosecurity such as treating and segregating new additions for 30 days is not only good to reduce risk of lice, it is also a great tool in decreasing introduction of other diseases.

Regardless of the soil moisture conditions at wheat planting time, there are a few important steps producers can take to improve their chances of getting a good stand of wheat:

Proper tractor speed. It is best to use a tractor speed of between 5 and 6 miles per hour in most cases when drilling wheat, depending on the amount of down pressure on the openers. If higher speeds are used, the openers can tend to “ride up” in the soil every now and then if down pressure is insufficient.

Proper, uniform seeding depth. The ideal planting depth for wheat in most cases is about 1.5 inches. When planting early into very warm soils, it is especially important not to plant too deeply since coleoptile lengths are shorter than normal under warm conditions. On the other extreme, producers should also be especially careful not to plant too deeply when planting later than the recommended time into very cool soils. Getting a uniform seeding depth is also important. Where producers are planting into fields with heavy residue, or where there is uneven distribution of chaff from the previous crop, uneven planting depth can be a serious problem. In those situations, it is common to end up with poor stand establishment in areas of the field where the drill opener rode up over the residue or chaff, and was unable to penetrate the soil to the same depth as in other areas of the field.

Firm seedbed. Planting into loose, fluffy soils can be a problem where soils have been tilled repeatedly during the summer. When seeds are planted into loose soils, rains in the fall will settle the soil and leave the crowns of the seedlings too close to the soil surface. Having a good closing system behind the drill openers, with adequate down pressure, should help.

Plant during the optimum window. In general, wheat should be planted somewhere around the Hessian fly-free date. There may be good reasons to plant some wheat before the fly-free date, such as planting for pasture or time pressures from having considerable acreage to plant. But stand establishment and ultimate grain yields are usually best when wheat is planted after the best pest management planting date (BPMP, former Hessian fly-free date) and before deadlines set by crop insurance. Planting more than three weeks after the BPMP can be risky. Late-planted wheat often does not develop an adequate root system before winter, and forms fewer productive fall tillers. When planting late, seeding rates should be increased by 25 to 50 percent to help ensure an adequate stand and compensate for the lack of tillering. See the accompanying article about the risks of planting wheat too early.

Adequate soil fertility. In general, producers should apply at least part of their nitrogen before or at planting time to get the plants off to a strong start. Nitrogen rates of 20-30 lbs can help with fall establishment and tillering. If the soil is low or very low in phosphorus or potassium, these nutrients should be applied at planting time as well so that the plants benefit early in their development. Starter phosphorus with the seed or band-applied close to the seed can also help with fall early growth and establishment, particularly in low-testing soils. Low soil pH can be a concern particularly early in the season when root systems are mostly near the surface, which is often an area of lower pH. Soil tests will determine the need for pH adjustment, and potential for aluminum toxicity. Variety selection and phosphorus application with the seed are potential management strategies for low pH and aluminum toxicity issues if it is too late to apply lime before seeding.

Make adjustments for planting into row crop stubble. When planting wheat into grain sorghum stubble, producers will need an extra 30 lbs N per acre over their normal N rate. Also, it is important to make sure the sorghum is dead before planting wheat. When planting wheat into soybean stubble, producers should not reduce their N rates since the N credit from soybeans doesn't take effect until the following spring. If the wheat is being planted no-till after row crop harvest, N rates should be increased by 20 lbs N per acre over the normal N rate. Seeding rates should be increased when planting wheat late after row crop harvest. It's best to use a seeding rate of 90 to 120 lbs per acre in central and eastern Kansas, and 75 to 100 lbs per acre in western Kansas. When planting more than three weeks after the BPMP date, producers should use a seeding rate of 120 lbs per acre.

Watch out for potential disease issues when planting into corn residue. The risk of some diseases may be higher when wheat is planted into fields with large amounts of corn residue left on the soil surface. Fusarium head blight (scab) of wheat, for example, is caused by a fungus that is known to cause a stalk rot of corn.

Using a seed treatment. Seed treatments can at times act as an insurance, helping avoid seed-born

and early-season fungal diseases. Check out a previous eUpdate article on seed treatments for wheat disease management at:

<https://bit.ly/3iF1nAW>

Key Banker's Conservation Awards

If you have anyone that you would like to nominate for any of the following awards, please let myself (Wendy) know. I can be reached by calling the Extension Office at 620-257-5131, or by e-mail at wshughes@ksu.edu.

Grassland Award: The purpose of this award is to give recognition to landowners who have made improvements in their pasture and management practices. Sponsored by the Marshall County Conservation District.

Windbreak Recognition: The purpose of this award is to give recognition to landowners who have made progress in the establishment and management of windbreaks.

Wildlife Award: The purpose of this award is to give recognition to landowners who have made progress in the development and stewardship of fish and wildlife resources.

Soil Conservation Award: The purpose of this award is to give recognition to those farmers and ranchers who have made improvements in the development of a complete soil conservation plan and implementation of that plan on their farms in accordance with the capability of the land.

Water Quality Award: The purpose of this award is to give recognition to those farmers and ranchers who have taken measures to improve and protect water quality on their farms and ranches.

Water Conservation Award: The purpose of this award is to give recognition to those farmers and ranchers who have taken measures to improve the beneficial use of an existing water supply and/or reduce water consumption on their farms or ranches.

Money Sense

Most people are not automatically sent a Medicare card three months before turning 65 unless they are already drawing Social Security Benefits. If you don't have employer work group health insurance with a business that employs more than 20 it is more important than ever to sign up for Medicare 3 months prior to turning 65. Talking to someone knowledgeable about Medicare prior to taking action is recommended.

Age 65 still serves as the Medicare Benefits eligibility age, but collecting your Social Security benefits is no longer that same age. It depends on when you were born. If you were born between 1943-1954 you must be 66 before you can receive your full retirement benefits for the years between 1955 and 1959 you will have to be 66 and some month. From years 1960 on you currently have to be 67 to get full Social Security benefits unless some unusual circumstances warrant earlier benefit qualifications. Check out the chart on the Social Security website to find out when you qualify:

<https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/planner/ageincrase.html>

Be a good consumer and shop for your Medicare prescription drug plan or Medicare Advantage plan each year. We can appreciate that for some people the value of consistency is worth more than the potential savings. If you decide to stay with your current 2020 Medicare plan into 2021, your Medicare plan coverage, and costs can change, so please take time to know how your current Medicare plan is changing for 2021.

How are Medicare Part D prescription drug plans or Medicare Advantage plans changing in 2021?

1. Your Medicare plan may not be offered in 2021,
2. Your Medicare plan's name may change,
3. You may be automatically reassigned to another Medicare Part D plan,
4. Your monthly Medicare Part D plan premium can change,
5. Your plan's Initial Deductible (the amount you pay before coverage) may change,

6. Your Medicare plan's prescription drug cost sharing design (co payment) may change,
7. Your Medicare prescription drug plan may be using preferred pharmacies,
8. Your Medicare Advantage plan's provider network may change,
9. The medications covered on your plan's formulary or drug list can change,
10. Your Donut Hole or Coverage Gap benefits can change,
11. Your 2020 Medicare Part D plan may no longer qualify for the LIS \$0 premium, and/or
12. Your Medicare Advantage plan's Medicare Part A and B maximum out of pocket (MOOP) limit can change.

Bottom Line: If you do not enroll into a new 2021 Medicare Part D plan or Medicare Advantage plan, you will be automatically re enrolled into your current Medicare Part D or Medicare Advantage plan for 2021 and your 2020 Medicare plan may cost you more money and provide different coverage in 2021.

The Good News: You still have plenty of time to review your 2021 Medicare plan coverage options during the annual Open Enrollment Period beginning on October 15 and continuing through December 7. How to learn more about the changes in your 2021 Medicare plan?

Your Medicare plan provider is required to summarize any 2021 plan changes in your Annual Notice of Change letter (ANOC) that you should receive in late September or early October. If you have not received a copy of your plan's ANOC letter, please call your plan's Member Services department and ask your plan to send another copy.



Address Service Requested

Welcome to Rice County...www.rice.k-state.edu

Your local Extension Office is a great resource for finding the information that you need. Have a gardening question? Check out our Lawn and Garden area. If you are interested in joining 4-H or being a volunteer, our 4-H Youth area has all the information you need to get started. Check out the Crops and Livestock Section.

Call us at (620)257-5131 or come visit our office at 701 East Main, Lyons.

Some of the services we offer are soil samples, we can check your pressure cooker before you start canning, cake pan check out, hay bale probe check out, Walk Kansas, Stay Strong, Stay Healthy Program plus much, much more.