

D's Notes **031918**

Annual Steak Supper

This year's annual steak supper will be held on Thursday, March 29 at 6:00 pm at the Hodgeman County Fair Building.

The speaker this year is Justin Waggoner, KSU SW Area Beef Systems Specialist. He will be talking on the "Energetics for the Cow-calf System."

Please register by Monday, March 26. Call the Extension office at 620-357-8321 to register or for more information. Sponsors include: Pawnee Valley Feed Yard, Boothill Feeders, Zoetis, MAP, Inc., and Bank of Hays-Hanston State Bank of Hanston and Farmers State Bank of Jetmore.

Come out and enjoy an excellent meal and learn about feeding a cow to receive the most efficient use of your feed.

TURFGRASS

Why Seeding Cool-Season Grasses in the Spring is Difficult.

People often wonder why we recommend seeding cool-season grasses such as tall fescue and Kentucky bluegrass in the fall. It would seem that the spring would be the more natural time for seeding because the entire growing season is available for the grass to become established before the turf has to deal with winter. Actually there are a number of reasons that tend to make fall seedings more successful.

The soils are warmer in the fall. Warm soils mean less time required for germination and growth so the grass becomes established more quickly. I have seen tall fescue seeded in the last week of August come up in four days. Now, you had to be on your hands and knees to see it but it was up. Tall fescue seeded in the spring may take well over a week to come up and the time required to become established is much longer.

Weeds are less of a problem in the fall. The major weed problems in the fall tend to be the broadleaves such as chickweed, henbit or dandelion. Turf seeded in early September is usually thick enough by the time these broadleaves germinate that often there is not much weed invasion. Even if there is some invasion by broadleaves, the turf is usually mature enough by early November that mild broadleaf herbicides can be applied.

In the spring, our major weed problems are the annual grasses such as crabgrass. Since the spring-seeded turf is slow to mature, there are often thin areas that are easily invaded by these grassy weeds. If this invasion occurs, the weeds are better adapted to our summer conditions than our cool-season grasses and so the weeds tend to take over. The number of chemicals that can be used on young turf is limited, and so these grasses become more of a problem. One of the preemergence herbicides that can be used on young grasses is dithiopyr (Dimension). It is found in Hi-Yield Turf and Ornamental Weed & Grass Stopper and Bonide Crabgrass & Weed Preventer and can be used on tall fescue, Kentucky bluegrass, and perennial ryegrass two weeks after germination.

Summer is the hardest time of the year for cool-season grasses; not the winter. Summertime is very difficult because our cool-season grasses do not have the heat or moisture stress tolerance that our warm-season grasses such as buffalo, zoysia and Bermuda have. Therefore they tend to become weakened in the summer which makes them more susceptible to disease and other stresses. Spring-seeded cool-season grasses are less mature and therefore less able to tolerate

these stresses.

Seeding cool-season grasses in the spring can be successful but is more difficult to pull off than fall seedings. If you have a choice, always opt for seeding cool-season grasses in the fall. (Ward Upham)

ORNAMENTALS

Cut Back Ornamental Grasses

March is a good time to remove dead foliage from ornamental grasses. Grasses green up earlier if foliage is removed and are more attractive without a mixture of dead and live leaves. A number of tools can be used including hand clippers, weed whips (if the foliage is of a small enough diameter), weed whips with a circular blade, or even a chain saw. Use the top of the chainsaw bar to cut so the saw doesn't pull in debris and clog.

Also, it is often helpful to tie foliage together before cutting so it doesn't interfere and is easier to dispose of. Burning is another option - but only if it is safe and legal to do so. Note that these grasses may not burn long, but they burn extremely hot. Even so, the crown of the plant is not damaged and new growth appears relatively quickly.

If the center of the clump shows little growth, the plant would benefit from division. Dig up the entire clump and separate. Then, replant the vigorous growth found on the outer edge of the clump. (Ward Upham)

For vegetable gardening success, K-State recommended varieties consistently shine.

Tested in Kansas, for Kansas growing conditions

K-State Research and Extension has updated its recommendations of vegetable varieties that have consistently proven themselves to be hearty, resistant to drought and disease, while producing good amounts of fruit.

These last few weeks of winter are a time of planning and preparation for home gardeners. Gardening catalogs arrive in mailboxes, while email accounts are filled with special offers from online retailers.

"I have so much admiration for the copywriters that write those three- or four-sentence descriptions found in gardening catalogs," said Dennis Patton, horticultural agent for K-State Research and Extension's Johnson County office. "Everything's wonderful, juicy, flavorful, 'performs better than the next.' "

"You never pick up a garden catalog and read 'this variety of tomato is a dog, it won't produce.'"

That's not to throw shade on seed catalogs - they couldn't stay in business very long if they consistently sold poor products. It's not that a new variety of tomato is a risk because it may not produce; the bigger question is, "where will it grow best?"

"Kansas has ever-changing weather patterns and conditions," Patton said. "We may start the day as hot or cold or wet or dry, and all that can change within a matter of 24 or 48 hours." Vegetable and plant varieties recommended by K-State Research and Extension have been tested in many of the research farms scattered across Kansas. "These are varieties that we know, through repeated plantings, consistently perform well year in and year out. That's a solid first step on the road to success."

In addition to visiting your nearest extension office for a list of these vegetable varieties, there are some electronic options. The official list of Recommended Vegetable Varieties (<https://www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/141.pdf>) has been maintained for many years, and

was updated in October 2017. The Horticulture Information Center maintains a list of recommended plants (<http://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/info-center/recommended-plants/>) that covers not only vegetables, but fruits, ornamentals, trees and more. Finally, if you want an in-depth look at a particular vegetable, start with this list of available vegetable publications (<https://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/publications/vegetables.html>)

Patton added that there's no reason to completely ignore those seed catalogs. "Make the K-State varieties the backbone of your garden, and maybe save space for one or two new things that interest you. There are so many unique, unusual fruits and vegetables out there - go ahead and put something new in, add a little bit of variety," he said.

If you have other questions, call the Hodgeman County Extension Office at 620-357-8321 or visit us on line at <http://www.hodgeman.k-state.edu>.

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