

Horticulture Tips

November 2007

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service
Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources
Oklahoma State University

New Host for *Oklahoma Gardening*

Kim Rebek became the new host for *Oklahoma Gardening* on August 25. Steve Owens, who has hosted the program since 2001, introduced Kim to the viewers on August 18 while saying his goodbyes to the television audience.

Kim said she is excited about this new career opportunity. "I see this position as a job I will look forward to each morning. One of the more appealing aspects of this position is that it demands I constantly learn and experiment with new gardening concepts and techniques to share with my audience," she said. "While it will be challenging to continually produce fresh ideas, this will also be a source of enjoyment."

Kim comes to OSU from Michigan State University where she held the position of professional aide to the state coordinator of the Michigan Master Gardener Volunteer Program. She earned her bachelor's degree in environmental studies at the University of Wisconsin and her master's degree in entomology from Purdue University.

GARDEN TIPS FOR NOVEMBER!

David Hillock

Lawn & Turf

- Fertilize cool-season grasses like fescue with 1 pound nitrogen per 1000 sq. ft.
- Continue to mow fescue as needed at 2 inches and water during dry conditions.
- Control broadleaf winter weeds like dandelions. ([HLA-6601](#))
- Keep falling leaves off fescue to avoid damage to the foliage.

Trees & Shrubs

- Prune deciduous trees in early part of winter. Prune only for structural and safety purposes.
- Wrap young, thin-barked trees with a commercial protective material to prevent winter sunscald.
- Apply dormant oil for scale infested trees and shrubs before temperatures fall below 40°F. Follow label directions.
- Continue to plant balled and burlapped trees.
- Watch for arborvitae aphids, which tolerate cooler temperatures in evergreen shrubs.

Flowers

- Tulips can still be successfully planted through the middle of November.

- Leave foliage on asparagus, mums and other perennials to help insulate crowns from harsh winter conditions.
- Bulbs like hyacinth, narcissus and tulip can be potted in containers for indoor forcing.

Miscellaneous

- Leftover garden seeds can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator or freezer until next planting season. Discard seeds over 3 years old.
- Gather and shred leaves. Add to compost, use as mulch or till into garden plots.
- Clean and store garden and landscape tools. Coat with a light application of oil to prevent rusting. Drain fuel tanks, irrigation lines and hoses. Bring hoses indoors.

Fruits & Nuts

- Delay pruning fruit trees until next February or March before bud break.
- Harvest pecans and walnuts immediately to eliminate deterioration of the kernel.

A Good Pecan Harvest Predicted – Location Dependent

Eric T. Stafne

The pecan harvest for 2007 has started in Oklahoma. Estimates of the crop for Oklahoma stand in the 15 to 25 million pounds range, which is slightly up from last year. If not for the freeze we had in April it may have been a near record year. The Easter freeze was definitely tough on the pecan trees this year in the northern parts of the state where the crop will be spotty. Since many trees in the northern part of the state lost the entire crop to freeze, next year's crop may be large. The excessive early summer rainfall also contributed to high amounts of pecan scab around the state. Pecan weevil was late in coming and totally absent in some areas. Usually, wet weather is conducive for the emergence of pecan weevils from the soil; however, perhaps the total saturation of the soil had a detrimental effect on the populations this year. Pecan Nut Casebearer populations were also diminished, likely due to the freeze. Prices are high again this year, so if someone has quality nuts, money can be made. The holiday season from October through December is when pecan demand is the highest and when the best prices can be had. Often folks with native pecans want to harvest nuts, but have no idea where to sell them. A list of buyers is listed on our website: <http://www.hortla.okstate.edu/pecan/images/pecanbuyers.pdf> This list is not all-inclusive, but does give a starting place to look.

Building a Cold Frame

Kim Rebek

Cold frames are used to protect plants from wind and cold. They rely on the sun to warm soil during the day. This heat is trapped inside the frame by a cover or sash. Cold frames have several uses. In the spring they can be used to start vegetable and flower seeds before outdoor planting, and can be used to harden-off greenhouse-grown seedlings or those started indoors before transplanting into the garden. The frame can be used to shelter tender perennials or to overwinter woody cuttings that had been rooted during the summer. During the summer you can remove the cover and use the frame as a protected propagation area or simply plant vegetables into it.

You can also use the cold frame to grow vegetables into the winter months. Many of the vegetables that can be grown in a cold frame are leafy greens, including lettuce, spinach, parsley and kale. Other suitable vegetables include carrots, green onions, chives and radishes.

Cold frames need to be located in a location where they receive plenty of sunlight and protection from chilling winter winds. The south side of a house, fence or evergreen hedge is ideal. Make sure that the wind break is not shading the frame. You also want to situate the frame so that it runs east to west. Frames can be placed at the soil surface or sunk into the ground to provide extra insulation. You want to think about drainage as you prepare the site. If drainage will be a problem, you may wish to put down a layer of gravel below the soil.

Cold frames are basically a rectangular box with a transparent cover. Most frames are built with wood sidewalls, though you can also use metal or masonry stones. Most people just use scrap wood they have stored around the home. Two-inch thick wood will provide good insulation. A variety of materials can be used to make the cover sash. Glass is the more traditional and ideal material. A used window frame makes an inexpensive sash. You can also cover the frame with clear 4 or 6 mil polyethylene supported on a wood frame. Plastics lose heat more quickly than glass, so a double layer with an air space between will work best. You can also use clear fiberglass for the sash.

The dimensions of the frame are going to vary depending on the amount of space available and the size and type of cover you have selected. You want the sash to be angled toward the south to maximize the amount of sunlight entering the box. Raising the north edge of the frame about six inches higher than the southern edge will create this angle. The side pieces are cut at an angle to accommodate the slope.

Once you have the frame built, you are ready to add the cover. If you are using polyethylene for your sash you can construct a simple frame using two by two sections of wood. Make sure the sash frame is large enough to lie over the box. Secure the plastic over both sides of the frame. This will create that air pocket inside to add extra insulation. Attach the sash using hinges, which will allow you to open and close the cover easily. You will also want to add a simple hook latch to hold the sash down in windy weather, especially if you build a light weight polyethylene sash.

Regardless of the type of structure you build, ventilation is going to be very important. Heat can build up quickly beneath the sash, so it is important to lift the cover slightly during the day for ventilation. You can use a brick or section of wood to prop open the sash. You may wish to attach a wood support to the frame with a hinge to keep it in place. Ventilation will be necessary on clear, sunny days when the temperature is above 45°F. You will want to prop it open farther when temperatures are higher. Make sure to close the box early enough in the late afternoon to capture heat for night.

There are a few things to keep watch for. First, check plants regularly for insects, such as aphids that may take refuge inside your warmed box. Also, water plants in the morning to allow plants to dry before nightfall, this will reduce disease. You can add extra heat by placing a large water-

filled black jug in the box to collect heat during the day and release it at night. This will be important as we move into the late fall and winter.

A Dog in Your Landscape

by Albert Sutherland, CPH, CCA

The Problem – Conflicting Desires

Most folks love the companionship of a pet. Many people choose to have a dog to provide security as well as companionship. In order for a dog to function as a watchdog, they need to be able to roam. When confined to a pen their value as a watchdog is severely curtailed.

At the same time, many people still want a landscape that is enjoyable and can meet recreation and entertainment needs. This program focuses on ways to have both a dog that can provide acceptable security and have a landscape that can be enjoyed.

Dog's Have a Personality Too

There are many dog breeds. One of the first considerations in trying to have a dog and a landscape is the natural tendencies of a dog's breeding. Some breeds are much more prone to digging, such as a beagle or Bassett. Others like Dalmatians can be extremely hyper. It is best to choose a breed that is compatible with your living situation. Many dog books, like the Simon and Schuster's Guide to Dogs, provide excellent descriptions of the most common breeds and their traits.

Harder to judge is the individual personality of a dog. This is just something you'll have to wait and see how it develops. Experienced breeders can offer suggestions based on early puppy behavior and customer feedback about mature dogs.

A Dog's Habits and Development Traits

Some basic dog traits cannot be changed and the landscape will have to be adjusted to fit these.

If you raise your dog from a puppy, you will go through some challenging times the first two years. The biggest hurdle is that your puppy's teeth will develop. This is the time when your dog will chew up just about everything it can find. Patience is the order of the day during these times. New projects should be delayed and specialty plants or beds will need to be fenced. In one rare instance a dog completely debarked and killed a six inch caliper elm tree.

Dogs patrol their territory. In a fenced backyard, a dog will cruise the entire perimeter. If delicate plants are in the dog's path, the plants will be trampled. A dog will investigate every time she/he hears a noise. Places closest to walks, doorways and vehicle parking quickly become areas of high dog traffic. These locations are near fence gates and fence areas closest to high traffic areas on the outside of the fence. Neighbors or next door pets will also attract a dog.

Oklahoma's heat is a challenge for outdoor dogs. One of the common ways to cool off is to find a shady location and dig away dirt to expose moister, cooler soil. Larger shrubs or an evergreen

tree with low branches will allow the dog to excavate some soil without damaging the whole plant.

These dog traits cannot be changed and so the landscape must be planned to anticipate a dog's movements and lessen the effects on plant material.

Dog Training

Dog training should not be considered an option. Providing some rules of conduct for a dog will help it be a happier, healthier dog. Dog training will help make walks an enjoyable time for the dog and owner.

Dogs that spend all day in a backyard need to get out for walks. Each dog is different, but most dogs do best if they have a twenty minute walk every other day. A daily walk is even better and will help calm your dog. When a dog is left in the backyard day after day, she/he becomes bored and falls into destructive behavior. A bored dog may start digging and tearing up items they have previously ignored. Walks also provide a time for the dog and person to interact preventing loneliness.

Planning the Landscape

The first step is to create a drawing of the property. Note all permanent structures, utilities, trees and shrubs. Determine the full extent of the dog's area and fencing that will be used to create this area.

Next, carefully analyze the high people areas that will correspond to a dog's high traffic areas. Consider how a dog can make the rounds of the yard's perimeter. How can a narrow path be left available along the fence?

Select and place plants so that dog can move between the plant and the fence. Taller shrubs that will grow above the height of the dog can provide greenery without obstructing the dog's travel. Evergreens can be full on one side and trimmed up on the opposite side near the fence.

Travel across or through the yard may need to be redirected with sturdy plants or a structure. Part of this can be planned while some of it requires one to observe a dog's travel patterns.

Plants that can break easily will need to be fenced off. Any hope of harvest in a vegetable garden will quickly be lost unless the dog is excluded. A water pond with fish will be too much of a temptation and also needs to have some decorative fencing to exclude the pooch.

For young, small plants, stakes can be used to keep the dog from trampling or laying on the plants until they gain some size.

Plastic wraps can be used to effectively protect small trees. Trees with a trunk diameter of three inches or larger will need to be protected with a fence. Don't immediately assume your dog will go after a tree; for the most part, cats rather than dogs cause the most tree damage.

Once the dog has become acclimated to his/her fenced area, some locations may show excessive traffic. These are often turn areas, stopping spots, sleeping locations or shady places. Landscape adjustments will need to be made such as moving a plant, mulching or extending a walk. Mulching is useful to cover bare soil areas where the dog is laying down and would crush flowers or groundcover.

Growing flowers in pots is an excellent way to get delicate plants up and out of the way of a dog. Potted plants allow the addition of color to patios and decks.

Tough Shrubs

Deciduous

Barberry
Crapemyrtle
Winged Euonymus
Rose of Sharon
Spirea
Smoketree
Cutleaf Sumac
Staghorn Sumac
Chastetree

Evergreen

Silverberry Elaeagnus
American Holly
Burford Holly
Foster's Holly
Nellie R. Stevens Holly
Yaupon Holly
Winter Jasmine
Juniper
Hollywood Juniper
Saybrook Juniper
Oregon Grape
Leatherleaf Mahonia
Nandina
Mugo Pine

Tough Vines

Crossvine
Trumpet vine
English ivy
Coral Honeysuckle
Boston ivy
Virginia Creeper
Wisteria

Tough Groundcovers

English ivy
Trailing Junipers
Tam Juniper
Liriope
Purple Japanese Honeysuckle
Honeysuckle
Mondograss
Perennial Vinca

Controlling Deer Damage

David Hillock

Oklahoma's white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) population has increased from 40,000 to more than 250,000 since the 1960s. As the deer population expanded, deer moved into peripheral suburban areas. Increasingly, homeowners at the rural/urban interface must deal with damage to ornamental and garden plants. As deer begin moving into an area, homeowners initially enjoy seeing them and may actually encourage deer to come into their yard by feeding them. Rural subdivisions may ban hunting or place restrictions on firearm use to protect their deer or for safety reasons. Homeowner attitudes begin changing after deer numbers increase to the extent that shrubbery shows heavy browsing and gardens become difficult to grow because of continued depredation. In addition to browsing, damage may occur in the fall when bucks begin rubbing antlers on small trees or young nursery stock.

Commonly Used Control Methods

The problem of damage control is not an easy one to solve. Trapping and moving excess deer is often suggested by homeowners as a humane alternative to hunting with guns or even limited hunting with archery tackle. However, the cost to move enough deer to lower damage to tolerable levels is definitely prohibitive. It should be recognized that most areas of Oklahoma are well populated with deer. Any deer moved to another area will only shorten food supplies for both resident and transplanted animals. Nature will then control the excess through starvation or decreased reproductive success because of chronic malnutrition. At best, trapping and relocating problem deer is only a short term solution.

Deer damage control methods fit into six categories:

- 1) exclusion—by electric fence or eight-foot high, deer-proof fence
- 2) scare or frightening tactics—with tethered dogs, gas exploders, fireworks or discharging firearms
- 3) habitat modification
- 4) population reduction through sport hunting
- 5) repellents—area repellents repel by smell and contact repellents repel by taste
- 6) alternative plantings

Control methods other than an eight-foot high, deer-proof fence or an electric fence reduce damage by 50 to 75 percent at best, and often much less. A deer-proof fence does not fit well with most landscaping plans and can be expensive if large areas are to be protected. For small gardens, a deer-proof fence can be cost effective. For best results they should be constructed before serious damage occurs.

Scare tactics work for only short periods of time, but may be useful by providing enough protection to allow the crop to be harvested. Habitat modification is expensive and may actually attract deer if misapplied. A professional wildlife biologist should be consulted if this is the desired course of action. Population reduction by sport hunting is the most cost effective, long-term solution and should be seriously considered if damage is wide spread.

Repellents which provide an unpleasant taste or odor can be used, but damage will not be entirely eliminated. Effectiveness will vary with deer density, season and availability of alternate foods. To be effective, repellents must be applied before deer begin actively browsing in the affected area. Area repellents are generally less effective than contact repellents. Research results on the relative effectiveness of area and contact repellents from several sources can be found in OSU fact sheet, [HLA-6427 Ornamental and Garden Plants: Controlling Deer Damage](#). Bear in mind that repellents will not completely eliminate damage and that a given method's effectiveness will change seasonally, based on what natural foods are available to deer. Many repellents do not weather well and will need to be reapplied after a rain.

To see a list of plant material that may or may not be affected by deer or for more information on control see fact sheet, [HLA-6427 Ornamental and Garden Plants: Controlling Deer Damage](#).

Controlling Insects in and Around the Home

David Hillock

The first important step in the process of insect control is to identify the insect that is present so that the proper control procedure will be used. OSU county extension educators, area and state extension specialists in Entomology, and pesticide dealers can help identify the pest for the homeowner, or the pest may be sent to the OSU Entomology Department for identification.

The homeowner can usually control light infestations of pests in the house by carefully following directions on the pesticide container and by doing a thorough job of application. Sanitation and good housekeeping are possibly the most important aspects in controlling or preventing pests, but even well-kept homes sometimes become infested.

Certain pests found outside may be eliminated before they enter the home. (For information on control of pests outdoors, refer to OSU Extension Fact Sheet ([EPP-7306](#))). However, some insects live entirely within the home, where they must be controlled by applying spray, dust, bait or aerosol pesticides to areas where they are most frequently found. If the infestation is severe and widespread, it is advisable to employ the services of a pest control firm, which has pesticides and application equipment not generally available to homeowners.

For more information on pesticides and their use in and around the home see [EPP-7312 Household Pest Control](#).

Safety Tips

- Read and follow all directions on the container label.
- Avoid repeated or prolonged contact of insecticides with the skin and prolonged inhalation of spray mist.
- Do not spray oil solutions near an open flame (pilot lights).
- Do not risk contaminating food by treating near food, dishes or cooking and eating utensils.
- Dispose of empty pesticide containers, and do not puncture or incinerate aerosol or pressurized spray cans.
- Store insecticides in the labeled original containers, in a dry place where they cannot contaminate foodstuffs and where children and pets do not have access to them.
- After using pesticides, always wash your hands and face and any other exposed body areas.
- For further information on handling, mixing and applying pesticides, consult your area or state extension entomologists, visit your local county extension educator and/or refer to OSU Extension Fact Sheet [EPP-7450](#) for information on safe use of pesticides.

Prevention and Control Hints

Before applying insecticides for pest control, the homeowner can help insure better control by doing the following:

1. Clean out areas that make good homes for the pest.
2. Clean up areas that collect grease, food scraps or other spillage which might provide a food source.
3. Eliminate excessive storage boxes from the attic and garage, and clean up foliage or other hiding places from around the outside foundation of the house.
4. If grain or flour pests are present, locate the infested material. Go through all cereal boxes, flour, beans, dry pet food and spice containers until the infestation source is located. Dispose of the infested material, then a light application of pesticide.
5. Carefully check newly purchased dried foods for insect infestations, and store foods in tightly sealed glass, plastic or metal containers rather than in sacks, bags or boxes.

NOTE on ultrasonic electronic or sound control devices: To date, these devices have not been proven to be effective or practical.

Oklahoma Cucurbit Vegetable Meeting

Jim Shrefler

Farmers, gardeners and others interested in cucurbit vegetables are invited to attend the 2007 Oklahoma Cucurbit Meeting that will be held Thursday, December 13, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Grady County Fairgrounds in Chickasha. The event is sponsored by Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, the USDA/ARS Lane Research Center and industry organizations. The Grady County Extension Office is the meeting site host.

This year's meeting will have a major focus on the Oklahoma Farm-to-School program, an effort that seeks to develop links between local produce growers and school food service programs. Cucurbit crops are key products that Oklahoma youth have enjoyed with their school lunch as the Farm to School concept became established in the state. The program has shown excellent potential for serving increased amounts of cucurbit crops, as well as other vegetables, to youth. Meeting attendees will hear more on the current state of the program and perspectives for the future from the Farm-to-School Program Administrator, Chris Kirby of the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry.

While cucurbit vegetables are important to modern society, they were also valuable to past generations living on the American continent. Dr. Fred Schneider, Professor Emeritus, University of North Dakota, will make a presentation on his work with cucurbit crops used by Native Americans and the preservation of these crop resources.

Additional meeting highlights will address various production and handling aspects of cucurbit crops. Tulsa County Extension Horticulturist Susan Gray will share results of the 2007 Oklahoma specialty melon trials. Dr. Warren Roberts of the Wes Watkins Research and Extension Center will address various vegetable production considerations for Farm-to-School growers. Finally, other production topics will include cucurbit vegetable diseases and disease management research underway in Oklahoma.

Cucurbits and health go hand in hand, and as with all food production, producers need to keep food safety in mind. Several aspects of cucurbits and health will be addressed at the meeting. Dr. Penny Perkins-Veazie of the USDA Agricultural Research Service at Lane Oklahoma will provide and update on the health benefits of cucurbit crops. Food safety, another great concern to all, will be addressed by Dr. William McGlynn of Oklahoma State University who will discuss what growers can do to insure the safety of their produce for customers.

To be successful, growers need to produce a marketable crop and also watch the bottom line. Part of this involves being successful with labor management. Dr. Merritt Taylor, Center Director and Agricultural Economist at the Wes Watkins Agricultural Research and Extension Center, will discuss some of the topics that a grower should be aware of when hiring labor for the farm.

There is no charge to attend this meeting which will include a lunch, courtesy of meeting sponsors. However, the meeting organizers ask that those who plan to attend contact the Grady County Extension Office at 405-224-2216 to facilitate planning of meal preparation and other meeting materials.

For more information or to be added to the meeting mailing list, contact Jim Shrefler at 580.889.7343 or jim.shrefler@okstate.edu. Watch our web site at www.lane-ag.org for more meeting details.

Master Gardener Corner

David Hillock

Horticulture Industries Show (HIS) – January 4-5, 2008. Planning for HIS is underway and program and preregistration forms will be mailed late November – early December. This year HIS will be held in Tulsa at the Tulsa Community College, Northeast Campus. All Master Gardeners are invited to attend. If you are a returning Master Gardener you can receive Continuing Education hours that will count towards the minimum 20 hours you need to keep active status. Remember, however, that only the time actually spent in class counts as training received. Travel and in-between times do not count.

Though we do offer a Master Gardener/Public Garden session, you may also choose from any other session offered during the conference. There are 7 commodity groups represented during HIS, all conducting seminars, workshops and business meetings. You may choose from any of the following groups - Vegetables, Fruit, Herb, Sustainable Ag, Farmers Market, Master Gardener/Public Garden, and Christmas Tree.

Topics for the Master Gardener/Public Garden session on Friday includes:

Polite Fences – Privacy with Plants

Irrigating with Drip Systems

Pesticides in the Home Lawn/Garden/House

Landscaping Tips for Overhead and Ground-Level Electric Facilities

Simple Irrigation Plan

Rustic Structures in the Garden

Successful Hydroponics in Oklahoma

Saturday topics:

Architecture Not Aesthetics: The First Consideration of Landscape Design

Honey Bees and their Life

Vermicomposting: Put worms to work for your garden!

New and Unusual Plants around the Tulsa County Extension Office

This should be another great conference, hope to see you there!

Southern Region Master Gardener Conference – June 2008

Next year we are hosting the Southern Region Master Gardener Conference, which will take the place of our state conference. The Oklahoma County Master Gardeners are hosting the conference, which promises to be an exciting one. The Southern Region consists of 13 different states from Oklahoma and Texas eastward to Virginia, the Carolinas and Florida, in addition to Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands; all will be invited to attend. The conference will be held June 18-21, 2008 at the Clarion Hotel and Convention Center in Oklahoma City. We are planning for 400 to attend this conference. We hope that you will mark your calendars and plan to attend. Planning and organization of the conference is still underway, but you can keep updated of the progress by visiting the official conference web site at www.mastergardener2008.com.

Upcoming Horticulture Events

Tree Care Conference

November 7, 2007, OSU Botanical Garden, Stillwater

University personnel at OSU-Stillwater will host a tree care workshop designed for arborists, horticulturalists, urban foresters and other allied professionals. The workshop will be taught primarily indoors with afternoon laboratories offered at the OSU Botanical Garden. For more information, contact Mike Schnelle at 405-744-7361, mike.schnelle@okstate.edu or visit <http://home.okstate.edu/Okstate/dasnr/hort/hortlahome.nsf/toc/eventcalendar>.

62nd Annual Oklahoma Turf Conference & Trade Show

November 13-15, 2007, Watkins Center, OSU-Stillwater

For more information about upcoming events, please contact Stephanie Larimer at 405-744-5404 or stephanie.larimer@okstate.edu.