K-State expert shares important chores in the garden for winter, spring

K-State Research and Extension news service

MANHATTAN, Kan. — With a change of seasons, Kansas State University horticulture expert Ward Upham said there are some important factors to consider when taking care of your home garden.

**Knotweed Control**

“Knotweed is an annual that germinates in late February or early March,” Upham said. “So a pre-emergence herbicide can be used in the late fall.”

The beginning of November is the ideal time to apply herbicide. For pre-emergence knotweed, Upham recommends brand names Scotts Halts, Weed Impede, Barricade, Dimension or XL. For post-emergence, Trimec, Weed-Out, Weed-B-Gon or Weed Free Zone can be applied in spring.

If seeding in the spring, another option is tilling, which will adequately control knotweed without the addition of a herbicide.

**Compost Pile**

Fallen leaves and other materials are abundant for the compost pile. It is vital to keep the compost pile moist in order for the materials to efficiently decompose.

“(T)he compost needs to be kept moist so that the bacteria and fungi can break down raw materials,” Upham said.

During times without a recent rain, a sprinkler can be used to soak through the pile. After wetting, the pile can be allowed to drain. Aim for the entire pile to be moist but not waterlogged. Edges can dry out quicker than the rest of the pile and can be lightly sprinkled to be moistened again.

For more information on composting, the K-State Department of Horticulture provides an instructional video or series of publications.
Upham and his colleagues in K-State's Department of Horticulture and Natural Resources produce a weekly Horticulture Newsletter with tips for maintaining home landscapes. The newsletter is available to view online or can be delivered by email each week.

Interested persons can also send their garden- and yard-related questions to Upham at wupham@ksu.edu, or contact your local K-State Research and Extension office.

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