Don’t wait to perform garden equipment maintenance

Proper cleaning and draining will extend the life of your garden tools and equipment

By Maddy Rohr, K-State Research and Extension news service

MANHATTAN, Kan. — As temperatures drop and the first freeze approaches Kansas, draining hoses and irrigation lines should be at the top of the to-do list. Kansas State University horticulture expert Ward Upham provides several tips to extend the longevity of garden tools and equipment.

“Hoses should be drained by stretching them and coiling for storage,” Upham said. "Water will drain as you pull the hose toward you for coiling."

Ultraviolet light can make hoses brittle and decay over time, so proper storage is necessary, he said.

Irrigation lines for lawn sprinkler systems should also be winterized by shutting off the main valve for the system and opening manual drains to prevent freezing in the lines.

“Lawn irrigation systems usually have shallow lines, and most lines are self-draining. These systems should be blown out with an air compressor. Lawn irrigation companies often offer this service,” Upham said.

If manual drains are present, they should be opened. Upham recommends mapping them so they can be closed next spring before the system is pressurized.

To clean garden tools, it is suggested to use a steel brush to remove dirt and debris from previous uses. Once this has been done, clean the metal portion of the tool with oil and a paper towel to prevent rusting in storage. The wooden handles should be sanded with grain sandpaper to prevent splinters and keep wood smooth.

Store equipment and tools in a covered shed or garage to prevent weathering during the winter months.
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 and gardens. 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.

-30-

FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS: Links used in this story


K-State Research and Extension local offices, https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/about/statewide-locations.html

K-State Research and Extension is a short name for the Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service, a program designed to generate and distribute useful knowledge for the wellbeing of Kansans. Supported by county, state, federal and private funds, the program has county extension offices, experiment fields, area extension offices and regional research centers statewide. Its headquarters is on the KState campus in Manhattan. For more information, visit www.ksre.ksu.edu. K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Story by:
Maddy Rohr
Maddy23@ksu.edu

For more information:
Ward Upham
785-532-6173
Wupham@ksu.edu