

September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024

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# The Grapevine

## Fleas?!

Has something been bugging you and I don't mean our traditional chiggers and ticks. Fleas have become a problem in some parts of the county leading to infestations indoors and itchy bites for the homeowners. Fleas are small, flat, wingless insects that infest the hair coats of mammals or plumage of birds. Adult fleas use their piercing-sucking mouthparts to feed on the host's blood. There are more than 2,400 species of fleas worldwide, but only a few regularly feed on dogs, cats, and humans. The most common pest in households is the cat flea, *Ctenocephalides felis*. Adult male cat fleas are only about 1/12- to 1/8-inch long (2 to 3 mm). Blood-engorged females range up to 1/5-inch long (4 to 5 mm). Newly emerged fleas are dark brown. Actively reproducing females are light brown to orange. A traditional flea control program involves applying topical insecticides to the infested pet and all animals they come in contact with, along with thorough mechanical and chemical environmental control. The first step in a flea control program is to kill fleas on the pet using a spot insecticide. Existing infestations can be eliminated by administering residual insecticides such as fipronil, imidacloprid, or selamectin once a month to kill adult fleas. Mechanical control procedures can enhance the effectiveness of a control program. A vacuum cleaner with a rotary beater bar can remove 15 to 20 percent of the larvae and 32 to 59 percent of the flea eggs in the carpet. Shampooing and or steam cleaning the carpet will reduce the number of fleas but rarely will eliminate a problem without additional control measures.



# Growing Garlic

While it might be tempting to say the gardening season is ending, some gardening activities still need to be done. A staple of many cooking dishes is garlic which adds some amazing flavor to quite a few recipes. Garlic is one of those plants that needs to be planted in the fall to establish over winter and then harvest the following season. As we approach the end of October we are entering the prime time to plant garlic in the garden, especially as we start clearing warm-season vegetables out after the growing season. Let's learn about this tasty bulb.

Garlic is a relative of onions and chives that has been grown for centuries for both its culinary uses as well as its medicinal use. Each garlic will grow a bulb of several separate cloves. Two different types of garlic can be planted in the home garden. The first type is a soft neck garlic. This type of garlic has the longest storage life, forms bulbs with more cloves, and forms a stalk that is easy to braid for storage. They do tend to have less flavor and be harder to peel, but their shelf life makes up for it. Inchelium Red and Silver White are two soft-neck varieties that do well in Kansas. Both varieties can be stored for 9 to 12 months. Inchelium red has a spicier flavor right after it's been harvested but mellows with time while Silver White has a mild flavor when harvested that gets more bite as it ages. The other type of garlic is called hard-neck garlic. This type is more flavorful, is easier to peel, have larger bulbs with fewer cloves however it doesn't last as long when stored. Music and Chesnok Red are two varieties of hard-neck garlic that do well in Kansas. Music has very large bulbs with big cloves. Both varieties will last about 4 to 6 months in storage. Hard-neck varieties are hardier and tolerate colder temperatures than soft-neck varieties however in Kansas we can successfully grow both types of garlic due to our fairly mild winters.



Garlic is best planted in mid to late October and then will be harvested in July. Be sure to purchase your garlic from a reputable source. It's best to avoid planting garlic you bought from the grocery store. Separate each clove from the garlic bulb, be sure when you plant to put the pointy side up about 6 inches apart in rows that are spaced about 12" apart. Plant the garlic approximately 2" deep in the soil then cover the cloves with soil and mulch in to protect them from our freeze/thaw cycle in the spring. Be sure to water things in well and continue to water them throughout the fall into the winter if there isn't any precipitation. It is possible to overwater and rot the cloves so avoid overwatering. Fertilize the area with a general-purpose fertilizer if a soil test indicates it's necessary.

Garlic will start to root once it's planted and start to send up a shoot even if nothing is visible above the ground. Once the ground freezes the garlic will sit over winter and then emerge in the spring when the temperatures warm up. Continue watering the garlic as needed throughout the growing season until it's close to time to harvest it. Garlic bulbs are ready to harvest when the lower third of the leaves have turned brown and dried out which typically is mid-July through early August depending on the variety. Picking garlic too early will result in small bulbs but waiting too long will result in cloves leaning away from the bulbs.

Garlic is a relatively easy plant to grow, just be sure to remember where you planted it so you don't till the plants up or plant something over the top of them in the spring. It's also important to remember to water them some throughout the winter if we have a dry winter. I'm hoping for a better garlic harvest this season but I'll take all the lessons I learned last year to help make this season better than last.

## Question of the Week- Anthracnose on Tomatoes



This fungal disease is a frequent problem in the latter part of the growing season, specifically on the ripening tomato fruit. Anthracnose results in a fruit rot that reduces the quality and yield of tomatoes. The symptoms of this disease first appear as small circular, slightly sunken lesions on the surface of ripening fruit. The spots quickly enlarge becoming bruise-like depressions that develop a water-soaked appearance beneath the surface of the skin. Soon after black concentric rings consisting of numerous small fruiting structures form in the center of the lesions. As lesions grow, they can join and cause the fruit to decay, which promotes microorganisms to

invade and rot the fruit entirely. This disease is common during warm, humid weather after rain or overhead watering where the spores splash onto the fruit from the ground. Disease development is favored by daytime temperatures over 80 degrees.

There are cultural practices that can help reduce the incidence of anthracnose. Anthracnose spores survive in plant debris and soil causing spores to get splashed onto fruit during heavy rain or even with overhead watering. Try to mulch around your tomatoes to prevent the splashing of spores from the soil. You should also provide support for your tomatoes either with cages, stakes, or trellises to increase air movement and decrease the likelihood of favorable environmental conditions for infection. Use soaker hoses or drip irrigation to prevent the splashing of the spores onto the fruit from overhead watering (there is only so much we can do with rain.) Remove any infected fruit as soon as you notice the damage.

If you have had issues with anthracnose in the past you can apply preventative sprays, once the fruits are infected they can't be saved. Spray options include the active ingredients *Bacillus subtilis*, chlorothalonil, copper fungicides, or maneb. Be sure to read the label to check the post-harvest interval (how long after you spray before you can harvest the fruit) and make sure it is labeled for anthracnose and the vegetable you are spraying.

## Weed of the Week- Plantains



Blackseed and broadleaf plantains are cool-season perennials that reproduces by seeds with each plant producing up to 20,000 seeds a year. These plantains form a spreading or upright basal rosette of broadly oval leaves with fibrous roots. The leaves are broad-oval, pubescent or smooth, and dark green. The petioles are often purplish. The leaves are up to 10 inches long, the margins entire or wavy, and the veins are prominent and parallel. Plantain flowers are numerous, inconspicuous, and small. They are borne along the ends of flowering stalk and appear like fingers or rat-tails. They grow 8 to 20 inches tall during May to September. Blackseed or broadleaf plantains occur in damp, infertile, or fertile lawns throughout the

growing season. They will tolerate compacted soils and light shade. To control these weeds without chemicals, maintain turf density and health through proper culture. These weeds can be hand-pulled or mechanically removed. Apply postemergence herbicides in mid-spring to early summer and/or mid to late autumn when weeds are growing actively. Preemergence herbicides can be applied before seed germination.

## Upcoming Events

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### Garden Hour Webinars:

October 2<sup>nd</sup>- Evergreens in Kansas

November 6<sup>th</sup>- Rabbit, Mole, and Deer Mitigation

December 4<sup>th</sup>- Home Hydroponics

## Upcoming Events:

September 14<sup>th</sup> at 9 am  
Plant and Seed Swap at  
Butler County Community  
Building

September 29<sup>th</sup> 12 to 5  
pm  
Greater Andover Days  
Master Gardener Booth

October 9<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm  
Houseplant Care at  
Bradford Memorial  
Library

# Butternut Squash and Lentil Soup

This is the perfect soup to use your summer and fall garden vegetables for a delicious dinner on those cooler fall nights or even on those cold winter nights.



### Ingredients:

3 garlic cloves, minced	1 tsp salt
3 carrots	8 cups vegetable stock
1 large yellow onion, diced	1 ½ cup lentils
1 leek	1 tsp dried thyme
1 medium butternut squash	1 tsp oregano
1 bunch kale	1 tsp lemon juice.
2 Tbsp olive oil	

### Directions:

1. Mince the garlic. Peel and chop the carrots into half moons.
2. Chop the leeks: chop off the dark green stems and the bottom roots, then slice each in half lengthwise. Place each leek half cut-side down on the cutting board, then chop it into thin half-moons. Rinse thoroughly in a colander to remove any dirt.
3. Chop the butternut squash: Slice off the neck of the squash and peel it with a vegetable peeler. Peel the base. Slice the base in half and scoop out the seeds. Slice the neck into thin rectangles, then into long slices. Turn the slices the other way and dice. Cut the base into thin slices and then dice into small squares.
4. Wash and chop the kale: You can also wait to do this step while the soup simmers.
5. In a large pot over medium heat, heat the olive oil; add the leeks or onions and sauté until softened, about 4 to 5 minutes. Add carrots and garlic and sauté for 3 to 4 minutes until softened.
6. Add the squash, vegetable broth, lentils, thyme, oregano, and kosher salt, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for about 20 minutes until the lentils and butternut squash are soft (taste test a few). In the last few minutes, add the chopped kale and simmer until tender. Add additional salt and pepper to taste. If desired, stir in the lemon juice.

Recipe Source: <https://www.ndsu.edu/agriculture/extension/recipes/butternut-squash-lentil-soup>



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# Plant Swap

Have your houseplants grown like crazy this summer? Did you divide your perennials and now have more than than you need? Bring your cuttings, rooted plants or perennial plant divisions to trade for a new plant!

## Location

Butler County Community Building  
200 N. Griffith  
El Dorado, KS 67042

## Guidelines

- Plants must be labeled with the name and care instructions
- Plants must be disease and pest free
- Any type of legal plant is allowed
- All seeds must be labeled for 2023 or after
- Other plant related items are allowed
- Ask before taking a plant
- Bring a plant to share

**September  
14th  
9 am-12 pm**

Contact Calla Edwards for any questions, more information, or to reserve a table at [callae@ksu.edu](mailto:callae@ksu.edu) or 316-321-9660

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