

the Grassette

TERRE VISTA LLC

I absolutely love what I do but at times it is quite a challenge, especially this time of the year. April and May are off the charts busy. There is never enough time or daylight to get everything done and now with both my daughters in track it is doubly hard to make their meets. I have to pick and choose which ones I will be able to attend. My wife and I decided a long time ago that whenever one of our children were participating in sport or event that one of us would always be there for support. With all that being said I get to throw in the ever unpredictable weather, which always adds its own drama to the mix. Many a well planned week has gone up in flames to a day with rain. But all in all this season has gone rather smoothly and the weather, thus far, has not made too big of an impact; I am crossing my fingers while simultaneously knocking on wood.

Kolby has finally made it home for the summer and I am sure glad to have some more testosterone in the air the estrogen has been too thick and I have spent many an evening in my basement office to get away from girls. I know I give the women in my family a hard time but I would not change anything, I love my girls but I am still not quite convinced that daughters are not a curse from God and beautiful daughters are for sure a curse.

JUNE 2009

I remember last year when Kolby was getting ready to go school in Arkansas, Stephanie was all upset because how could Kolby ever find a girlfriend at a college with such a small student body, not to mention the fact that Kolby was not at all interested in finding anyone. After all, what 21 year old boy do you know that is looking for a wife, I dare say not many? You see my wife cannot wait for grandchildren, in fact, she loves children. During the school year she works at the pre-school at the Church of the Magdalene and the dirty little secret is that she would do it for free. My wife has a special gift in dealing with children; some would say that I have given her a lot of practice.

So anyway when we sent Kolby off to school Stephanie just knew that he would never find a girl. No girl, now wedding, no grandchildren. When it comes to moments like this in my life I recall advice given to me while I was evolved in basketball. You see, the way I was raised all things could be best explained through sports; more precisely, basketball. I remember on one occasion I was having trouble scoring, it seemed that everything I shot was not going in and I was very frustrated, my coach pulled me aside and told me to “relax and let the game come to me.” Translation: “stop trying too hard” and everything would take care of

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itself. Well I told my wife of this analogy and she just gave me this blank stare. So I retorted “a watched pot never boils,” she understood but Stephanie is not blessed with patients and she is always trying to force the issue. Anyway a few months went by and Kolby, who was now the manager for the basketball team at his school, came to McPherson for a basketball tournament. I was sitting across the court but I noticed his interaction with this particular girl. I am a wannabe psychiatrist and I have talent for reading body language. Any way I knew that something was up. I did not dare tell Steph as she would play 20 questions and I was not in the mood to defend my observation. Sure enough a few weeks later Kolby gave Stephanie a call and asked her if he could bring home “Emily” to meet the family during the Easter Holiday. Stephanie was shocked and asked me if I knew anything about this sudden change of events. Then I was grilled and it was more like “50 questions” so I learned a valuable lesson as well. Emily is a great young lady and more importantly she comes from a good Christian family. Stephanie loves the fact the Emily is so open and her personality is great fit for Kolby. In fact, Emily informed us during her last visit that Kolby was voted President of the student body for the 2009-10 school year, something Kolby would have never told us.

Turf's Up



I just wanted to take this opportunity to ask everyone's cooperation, many of you are watering your lawns on the same day that we perform our service, and I ask that you all check your systems to make sure that your clocks are set on the right time and even the right day of the week. I appreciate your help.

Just when I thought that it would never stop raining earlier this month; we are now experiencing a mini-drought. It has now been several weeks since we had any measurable precipitation and our lawns could sure use a drink from mother nature. Luckily, June is typically our wettest month here in Wichita, so I am sure a little rain will be in the forecast. Remember grass needs about an inch of moisture per week to maintain its vigor. All in all our lawns are in pretty good shape.

I will also be applying your second round of fertilizer this month; this application will be the last feeding until sometime in September.

Again this season I have noticed "little barley" making another appearance. This is a weed that germinates in the fall and then appears in the spring; it grows to a height of three to six inches or so and resembles miniature wheat. There is not a chemical currently on the market that can specifically target "little barley" without harming the rest of the turf. The only thing that will take out this weed is 80 degree temperatures, by the first or second week on June you should not notice it anymore. I have tried using a pre-emergent in the fall to try and stop the germination of little barley but I found that it was only about 50% effective and so I do not recommend this approach. Another cool season weed grass that we are seeing again this season is "orchard grass" it is the limey green grass that grows much taller than the fescue around it, again there is no chemical cure just 80 degree temperatures will do the trick. Orchard grass was introduced into the lawns by using cheap seed with weed grasses mixed in with the grass

seed that is why I always recommend using Kansas Premium Blend fescue with the "blue tag" guarantee that signifies no weed seed present. The Kansas premium blend may be a little more expensive but as always you get what you pay for.

Like I said earlier I will be getting on the second round of fertilizer sometime early this month. Did you know that when lightning streaks across the sky nitrogen is released into the atmosphere and then when it rains that N is picked up by the falling rain and distributed on our lawns like a free dose of fertilizer? This is another reason why I have not been in a hurry to add even more N to the mix. Not to mention every time we want to put the bags of fertilizer on the truck rain is in the forecast and rain does not mix at all with a lawn spreader, in fact, even on dewy mornings the water come up from the tires of the spreader can interfere with the proper flow of the fertilizer from the spreader. Nothing is more frustrating than having the entire hopper filled with fertilizer and then it gets all gummed up and not flows at the desired rate. Please be patient and I will get to you as soon as possible.

Carpenter Bees

By
Jeff Whitworth &
Holly Davis

The Insect Diagnostic lab is beginning to get a lot of calls about "big bees swarming around outside of homes". These are Carpenter bees and resemble bumble bees but have bare abdomens that are a shiny black to iridescent green. In the spring these bees, which overwinter as adults, are emerging and looking for other bees to mate with. The male bees can be rather aggressive and may "dive bomb" people in their vicinity. However, they are harmless as they can not sting. The females are capable of stinging but generally will not do so unless handled or molested. After mating in the spring, female carpenter bees tunnel into wood to lay their eggs, producing round holes about 1/2 inch wide. These eggs will develop throughout the summer and the young adults will spend the winter in these tunnels. The next spring the



cycle begins again. The next generation of carpenter bees may use tunnels that are already there, they may enlarge or extend the current tunnels, or they may excavate new ones.

Carpenter bees prefer to attack wood that is bare, weathered, and unpainted. They prefer softwoods such as redwood, cedar, cypress and pine. Common nesting sites are eaves, window trim, siding, decks, and outdoor furniture. The best way to avoid an infestation is to keep all exposed wood surfaces painted. Stains and varnishes will repel the bees to some degree but are not as effective as paint. Once an infestation has been detected, the tunnel entrances can be treated with an insecticide that has residual activity. Treating at night is most effective while the bees are inactive in the tunnels. The holes should be left open for a few days to allow the bees to come in contact with the insecticide and distribute it throughout the tunnels. Then, the holes can be plugged to prevent further use by carpenter bees and reduce the chances of wood decay.

Watering Houseplants While on Vacation

We are approaching the time of year when many people take their vacation. In the rush to get everything done before leaving, don't forget your houseplants will probably need watering while you are gone. The best alternative is to have someone water them for you. However, if this is not possible, there are alternatives.

1. Well-plants can be placed inside a plastic bag by wooden dowels or similar to keep off the leaves. Make sure the enclosed plants will not receive full sun as heat buildup may cook them. Bright, indirect light is best. Plants should keep for about a week with this method.



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2. This method requires an old dish drying rack, a bathtub in a bathroom with some natural light and some shoelaces. Place the drying rack upside down in the tub and add several inches of water. Push one end of a shoelace through a drainage hole on the bottom of a pot and into the potting soil of your houseplant.

The other end of the shoelace dangles into the water. What you have made is a wick system that will replace water in the pot as the plant uses it. Plants can last a couple of weeks if you have enough natural light.

3. There are numerous commercial products that can be used to automatically water houseplants in your absence. The advantage of these products is that the houseplant does not normally need to be moved. All require a reservoir from which water is either siphoned or pumped to individual houseplants. Houseplants should last as long as the water holds out.

My Pet Peeves

1. **Bad Attitudes:** My high school basketball coach (who is now is Roy Williams' asst coach at North Carolina) had a saying "attitude is a little thing that is everything." I've seen one employee's bad attitude bring everyone else's down. I understand, however, that being positive is difficult I struggle everyday to keep a positive attitude. But if you look hard enough you kind find some kind of silver lining, ok maybe it's tarnished and in need of a little polishing. Just remember, "everyday is a good day some are just better than others."
2. **Littering:** Just the other day I saw a car with a bunch of teenage girls (not that I am picking on girls it just so happens that is what I saw) they were stopped at the intersection of Rock & Harry. The passenger side doors opens and out comes the ash tray and all the paper from their fast food lunch. It just made me sick. I remember one day many years ago when one of my guys threw a cup out the window of my truck. I slammed on the brakes and told him "either you get out and pick that up or you can stay here with it." You would not believe how much trash we pick up in a normal week, usually enough to fill up a few garbage bags.
3. **Thieves:** People who take things from others to give to people who do not earn them. Congress comes to mind but for now I will leave them alone, I just got my new computer and I would hate to give it a whack. Every season that I have been in business we have had things stolen, but last season took the cake. I bought a Red Max EB 2000 backpack blower (the strongest and most powerful on the market I might add).

Anyway I bought it on a Wednesday for \$525.00 by Thursday it was stolen right off our truck while we were in the back yard of one of our customers, I was furious. So now I have a bicycle chain lock that we run through it each time we are finished. In fact my key ring resembles that of a janitor, every piece of our equipment is locked down.

4. **Indecision:** I cannot stand it when people can't make a choice. Jump! Make a decision, then stick to it (I hate wafflers) If the choice is wrong learn from it and move on, we learn more from our poor decisions than the ones that went right. I'm not being simplistic here, I understand that some decisions take careful thought and planning but most day-to-day decisions do not require such meditations. I am constantly working with my children to not sit on the fence. I do not know who said this but "the only thing in the middle of the road are yellow lines and dead animals." And with that I will now get off my soapbox.



June ToDo's

1. Fertilize warm season lawns.
2. Wichita Garden Tours start look in the Eagle for locations.
3. Keep an eye out for bagworms.
4. Kansas Grown Farmers Market from 7 am to noon every Saturday @ the Sedgwick County Extension Service.
5. Keep pinching back mums until July 4th
6. Deadhead roses and geraniums, remember geraniums are heavy feeders so try to feed them at least once per week if you want to keep up the flowering production.
7. Plant more tomatoes for a September crop.

MAKING PESTO

Since I am limited to what I can grow in my garden, because of all the shade our yard has, we like to grow herbs in clay pots. One of the easiest and one of our favorites is basil. And one of the simplest ways to use basil is in making your own pesto sauce.

All you will need is a blender. In the blender add one tightly packed cup of clean, dry, chopped basil leaves. Next add two cloves of fresh garlic, ¼ teaspoon ground pepper and a ¼ cup of a good olive oil. Add a half-cup of pine nuts (they are better if you toast them but it is not necessary) or walnuts (they will work in a pinch. Puree all the ingredients together. The last step is to stir in 1 cup of either Romano or Parmesan cheese. This recipe makes a little over a cup of pesto, but if you have ever used pesto you know that for each serving of pasta it only takes about a tablespoon or so.



We also like to use the pesto as a condiment on a sandwich in the summertime. By using pesto we do not have to worry about keeping mayo cold, and it gives any sandwich a new flavor. We also like to freeze the pesto in an ice cube tray and then put them into a freezer bag and use them in the winter either as pesto for pasta or add them to your favorite soup or stew.

Check out my website in the next several weeks as I will be updating with pictures of family, ideas for annual pot plantings etc.

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Have a Great Day!