

the Grassette

TERRE VISTA LLC

What a spectacular fall this has been so far, of course I am speaking of the color as the temperatures have been a little too chilly. In fact we are on record to having the second coldest October in history. Back to the color, many seasons ago the researches at K-State felt that the colors could be attributed to the prior seasons of drought. Their thinking was that the colors were more vivid after a period of summer drought because the roots of the trees have to travel further into the soil looking for water and thus encountering rich mineral beds; leading to spectacular color the following fall. Well this season sure blows that theory right out of the water as 2007, 2008, and 2009 have all been well above normal amounts of moisture, in fact just last year was a record year with almost thirty inches rain above normal. Now I am by no means a scientist but over my 23 years of observation I really feel that temperature plays a bigger roll more than anything. This year we have had very cool nights since late August and we have not had a hard freeze as of this writing thus putting together a perfect season of color. So sit back and enjoy this Autumn as they do not come along much more special than they have this season. This is one of the main reasons why I love and live in the College Hill area; it is for this time of the year, oh and the

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Halloween season is a great perk as well.



I have also included an article by Ward Upham of KSU on page 2 so you can read his scientific theory as well.

Poor Regan she turned 15 on the 13th and she also got an unappreciated gift in the form of the dreaded "Swine Flu" I am not making light of the flu but rather the hysteria around it, so far I think only 87 people have died from this strain world wide. Did you know that last season some 35,000 people died from the seasonal flu that hits this country every season? My wife told me that they are not concerned with the deaths but rather the fact that so many people are contracting the disease and I must concede her point as last week she had almost half of their students out in her pre-K class.

But for the third straight loss to Texas and the loss of our Heisman winning quarterback October was a pretty good month. This past week-end, however, marks one of the saddest weekends. It is the time of year when I bag up the patio furniture cushions and start the long process of bringing in the posts and deciding which plants I want to bring into the house to over-winter.

Remember it is always better

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to bring in clay pots out of the winter's elements as the constant freezing and thawing can drastically reduce the life of your pots. In fact, I have had some pots for over ten seasons and the only thing that I have done is to bring them into the garage for protection. We spend so much time outdoors and we even take many of our meals outside. Anyway my backyard seems so sad and barren, although, I do like how things look after a snowfall but even that is short lived. I can hardly wait until the spring thaw comes and I can once again fill my pots with plants and flowers, basically my backyard is my sanctuary, oh well, only 135 days spring and only 311 days until kick off. My two favorite things outside my faith and family of course, are gardening and Oklahoma Football I have even combined the two as in various parts of my landscape you will find the colors of crimson and cream.

All is well with my family and the time is going by too fast. As you will remember my daughter Alex is now 18 and my other daughter Regan is only one year away from driving. Where did the time go? I know that many of you have gone through the same thing but like in all things you really do not understand until it is happening to you.

I would like to thank all of you for your business and I would like to announce that there will not be a price increase in 2010.

"I am addicted to pot"

Okay, I am not really addicted to pot but rather pots, isn't it amazing how one little letter can change the entire meaning of a headline. But as I read in the newspapers and watch the network news; I know how the game is played, if it is sensational enough you will read or watch and who really wants to read an article about a middle-aged man who has a thing for clay garden attire.

So I must come clean; I have been banned by wife from at least 1000 feet of Nature's Way on east Kellogg. It seems that I cannot pass by that store without purchasing a pot or two or three... To date my backyard is filled with almost 75 different pots filled with all sorts of different colors and textures.

To my defense I use a lot of them for experimentation to see what works and what does not, or at least that is what my wife has been told. But seriously I have only a limited amount of garden space in my backyard and the space I do have is mostly in shade. The areas of my back-yard covered with brick and we all know that there is nothing that will grow on brick except for of course a "Chia Pet," or that miracle grass as seen on a late night T.V. infomercial, and with all that brick I use the pots to soften up the area and bring color to my backyard space. The only draw back is when it comes to summer when they all have to be watered daily or least every other day. Next year I plan on installing a drip irrigation system to water so that I do not have to spend a great deal of my limited time watering them.

I really do use the info I get to share with my customers and I use many of my ideas from previous years to beautify my customers' patios as well. Using clay pots are a great way to use your imagination and unlike deciduous shrubs you can change them from year to year according to you likes and dislikes. In fact I am already planning my next spring's foray into gardening excellence. As I told you this spring I have newly discovered coleus and I will be using it extensively next season, their colors and textures are amazing and I really like the dimension that they brought to my display. Their only drawback was that they are very susceptible to low temperatures, when the mercury hit the low 40's they began to decline quickly, even the traditionally weak impatient ones outlived them. This past summer when my wife was

hosting her annual garage sale I had a couple of ladies from the garden tour who wanted to put my yard in the rotation. I declined as spring is our busiest time of the year and there would be no way on this earth that I need to be squeezed any more. Although their interest did give me some validation for my own selfish needs. I got so busy this past year that I did not even have time to take pictures and post them on my website, I hope to change that this season.



November To-Do's

- ?? Plant ornamental trees & shrubs.
- ?? Cover perennial, vegetable, strawberry beds for winter.
- ?? Plant spring flowering bulbs.
- ?? Pre chill tulip and hyacinth bulbs for indoor forcing.
- ?? Rake lawn to remove debris.
- ?? Protect roses with mulch for winter nap.
- ?? Prune fall & winter flowers/shrubs just after bloom.
- ?? Prune hardy deciduous and evergreen shrubs
- ?? Protect tender plants from frost.
- ?? Clean off dirt from lawn & garden tools and put a light coat of oil on them for winter storage.
- ?? **ONLY 55 SHOPPING DAYS UNTIL CHRISTMAS**

Fall Colors of Trees

By Ward Upham

This is a question that I get all the time, especially this time of the year. I think that this pretty good article that I recently ran across on why causes leaf color in the fall.

Part of the allure of fall foliage is color variation. There are trees that turn red, purple, yellow, orange and brown. Specific plant pigments determine individual colors. Foliage derives its normal green color from chlorophyll, the substance that captures the energy of the sun. Other pigments produce fall colors. Reds and purples are caused by anthocyanins, yellows by xanthophylls, and oranges by a combination of carotenes and xanthophylls. Browns



are the result of tannins present in the leaf. Most of these substances are present throughout the growing season but are masked by the green color produced by chlorophyll. Anthocyanins are the exception and are produced after the chlorophyll is destroyed in the fall.

If you have ever seen pictures of New England in the fall, you have probably wondered why trees in Kansas usually do not color as well. This difference is partly because of the tree species prevalent in New England. Certain oaks and maples naturally produce good color. Coloring also is influenced by the weather.

Warm, sunny days and cool nights are ideal for good color. The sunny days encourage photosynthesis and, thus, sugar accumulation in the leaves. As fall progresses, each leaf develops an abscission layer at the base of the petiole, or leaf stem that prevents these sugars from being transported down the trunk to the roots for storage. This high sugar content in the leaves produces more intense colors. Cloudy days and warm nights prevent some of the sugar accumulation in the leaves and results in less vibrant colors.

Weather during other parts of the growing season also can have an effect. Heavy rains in the early spring or hot, dry weather during the summer can both have a deleterious effect on fall color.

The length of time a tree maintains fall color also depends on weather. Reds, yellows and oranges are short-lived when trees undergo frosts and freezes.

Typewriter Woes

Like I have written many times I love technology I am just sometimes slow to adapt to it. Case in point, a friend of mine just told me about a website called "Craig's List" it is a sight that anyone can sell anything and it is free to place an ad it is basically a free classified section of your newspaper only it is at your fingertips 24 hours a day. My entire family already new of this site years ago but I was never included and I felt a little out of touch but what's new.

Anyway for weeks my guys have been complaining because their hand written paychecks are getting harder and harder to cash. You see my handwriting is atrocious; it has been said that I have the penmanship of a doctor, in fact, that is what I started out in college with my major but my mother insisted that I get into the "green industry," she told me that being a doctor was fine but the real

opportunity was in grass and me being a good old southern boy did what my mother told me.

I decided to give this Craig's List a try. On my first attempt I found a typewriter for sale on the west side of town for only \$10 dollars I thought I would just jet on over and pick it up. When I got to the guy's house that was selling it he told me that he was recently laid off so I felt good about my purchase after all a new typewriter is about \$75 so it was a win, win situation for the both of us. I got it home and I started typing out the checks only when I looked at what was being printed it did not match the keys that I was hitting, so Mike Roberds came out as Thpf Fonetds. I then went to Office Depot to pick up a new daisy wheel thinking that it was the problem after all this is what did the trick in my college days. When I was at Office Depot I asked an attendant about the typewriter accessories, he looked as if he did not know what I was talking about. After a quick call on is headset he directed me to the correct isle. After I blew off the fine layer of dust, leaving me to believe that typewriters were a bit antiquated. The daisy wheel that I was looking for only came in a starter pack that included ribbon and corrective tape for a cost of \$39.95. I bought it and took it home and gave it a try, this did not fix the problem. So when all else fails I turn to the yellow pages, I found a business machine repair company that said he could fix the problem. I called to make an appointment to bring it in only his hours are from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm M-F thus making it difficult for me to make it, so I asked him if there were any other options. He said that I could drop it off at the business next door, "Magic Planet." I said that I would and so the next day I was on the south side of town and I decided to drop off the typewriter for the necessary repairs. Boy was I in for a shock, you see Magic Planet is drug paraphernalia/ sex shop; I do not embarrass easily but I can assure that I was quite red-faced when I slinked back into my truck the last time I felt like this is when I watched and episode of the "Jerry Springer Show." Anyway Bob called me a couple of days later and told me that my typewriter was ready. I made sure that I picked it up during regular hours as I did not want a repeat performance. When I got the bill it was for \$69.95. In total this ten dollar typewriter just set me back about \$119.90 this is what I get for trying to save a buck, usually I make very solid business decisions but every once in awhile I am not on my game. Oh well, you live and hopefully keep learning.



Questions on Ornamental Grasses

Customers are always asking me whether it is best to cut back ornamental grasses in the fall or spring. Ornamental grasses should **never** be cut back while green as they need time to move the energy found in the foliage into the roots. Even when browned by cold weather, most gardeners will leave the foliage until spring because of the interest it adds to winter landscapes. Early March is the preferred time to cut back these plants. However, dry foliage is extremely flammable and should be removed in the fall from areas where it is a fire hazard. Another question I am often asked is whether we can divide ornamental grasses in the fall. Spring is the preferred time as divisions done in the fall may not root well enough to survive the winter

Pine needles dropping?

I have several panicked customers calling me with the fear that the needle drop that they are seeing is the dreaded pine wilt disease that they have been reading about. Ninety percent of what they (you) are seeing is quite normal it is just the pine tree losing its second or third year needles. You have nothing to worry about if the needle drop is noted towards the interior of the tree.

Holiday Gift Ideas

Gardening Books

The first thing to have is a gardening book my favorite is called "Pictorial Guide to Perennials" by M. Jane Coleman Helmer Ph.D. & Karla S. Decker Hodge, B.S. It is a great reference guide filled with many pictures, all the perennials mentioned in the book are well suited for our zone here in Wichita.

My favorite perennial, which also happens to be the most foolproof perennial on the planet, is the hosta. Hostas come in many colors and leaf shapes with a variety sizes. They come in sizes from gigantic (48" wide by 48" tall) to miniature (6" wide by 6" tall). They also have many different flowering times, from varieties that flower in the early spring to ones that flower in the late summer to early fall. Do yourself a favor and try a hosta, I have over 15 varieties in my yard alone. The best book that I have found on hostas is: "The Gardener's Guide to Growing Hostas" by Diana Grenfell.

Gardening Tools

The next thing every gardener should have an assortment of shovels. There are at least four types of shovels you need. 1. Round point digging shovel. 2. Spade 3. Flat edge shovel for scooping. 4. Trowel for digging small holes for annuals and such.

www.gardeners.com

Pruning Equipment

Pocket snips are easy to carry around and make great stocking stuffers and at about \$7 they are reasonably priced. I prefer the by-pass type pruner, I have had mine for a number of years. They come in right and left handed models.

www.fiskers.com or www.corona.com

Indoor Gardening

How about a moisture meter for people who forget to water plants? Or you can buy a decorative pot and fill it with small items like seeds, shears, or small gardening tools, put the drainage saucer on top and tie the pot and saucer up with a bow.

Veterans Day



I would like to thank all the veterans for serving our great land I am in constant awe in how men and women can drop everything in order to keep our country free, it is an act of utter selflessness and a debt that we can never repay except to remember the following quote. Thank you!

"Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same."

Ronald Reagan

Happy Anniversary to my wife Stephanie!

11/07/86



Terre Vista

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