

January/February 2020

Jasper County

Do new seed catalogs making you think of spring?

Before you order...

To avoid disappointment when you purchase garden items from mail order catalogs, ask yourself these questions.

Who am I ordering from? Buy from reputable companies. Gardeners are willing to share their experiences, ask.

What am I ordering? Sometimes the write up is written to appeal, but may not indicate the less than favorable attributes of the plant. Also, look for a Latin or scientific name as many plants share a common name. This way you will know what you are ordering.

Where is the plant going? Wonderful plants will not do well in the wrong environment. Plants need to fit the site. Make sure the plant fits for sun/shade levels, soil conditions, as well as your landscape considerations.

Will it grow here? Hardiness is an important factor for trees, shrubs, and ornamental plants. Buy for your zone, as well as your microclimate.

Does the plant have specific needs? Be honest in the amount of time you have to take care of the plant(s). If the plant requires pruning, deadheading or pest control do you have time to complete the task?

*This article was prepared by Suzette Striegel,
Mahaska County Extension Horticulturist*



Iowa State University Extension and Outreach

Available Horticulture Publications
to help plan your garden

*Publications with *available for free download*

PM 874 * Starting Garden Transplants at Home

PM 814 * Where to Put Your Vegetable Garden

PM 819 * Planting a Home Vegetable Garden

PM 820 * Garden Soil Management

PM 607 * Suggested Vegetable Varieties for the
Home Garden

HORT 3068 * Top 13 Vegetables to Donate to
Food Pantries

RG 215 * Gardening in Iowa Zones

HORT 3027 Garden Calendar \$7

**These publications and more are available for
download or to purchase at county Extension
offices (call for availability) or to print at ISUE
online store <https://store.extension.iastate.edu>.**

Minimize Deicing Salt Damage in the Home Landscape.

Richard Jauron, Extension Horticulturist

Snow and ice are headaches for motorists and pedestrians. To prevent accidents on slippery surfaces, highway departments, businesses and homeowners use deicing compounds to melt ice and snow on roadways, parking lots, sidewalks and driveways. While deicing materials improve travel conditions, they can damage automobiles, concrete surfaces and landscape plants.

Deicing Materials

Most deicing materials are salts that melt ice and snow by lowering the freezing point of water below 32 degrees F. Commonly used deicing salts include sodium chloride (NaCl), calcium chloride (CaCl₂), potassium chloride (KCl), and magnesium chloride (MgCl₂). Abrasive materials, such as sand, do not melt ice or snow. However, they improve traction on snow and ice-covered surfaces.

Effects of Deicing Salts

Deicing salts can damage landscape plants when excessive amounts accumulate in the soil. The most serious damage typically occurs near major streets and highways where salt from run-off accumulates in the nearby soil. Excessive use of salt by homeowners can also create problems. Trees, shrubs, perennials and turfgrasses are susceptible to salt damage. Additionally, spray from passing vehicles can damage roadside plants, particularly evergreens.

Salts affect plant growth in several ways. When high levels of salt are present in the soil, plants are unable to absorb sufficient water even though soil moisture is plentiful. Plants suffer a salt-induced water shortage termed "physiological drought."

High levels of salt restrict the uptake of essential nutrients by plant roots. Excessive amounts of sodium and chloride ions in plant tissue are toxic to many plants. Soil structure is damaged by high levels of sodium. Salt deposited directly on plant foliage can cause dehydration of plant tissue.

The symptoms of salt injury to deciduous trees and shrubs include stunted growth, marginal leaf scorch, early fall coloration and twig dieback. Accumulation of salt in the soil over several years may result in progressive decline and eventual death.

Salt damage to evergreens results in yellowing or browning of the needles and twig dieback. Evergreens near heavily salted roadways are often damaged by salt spray. Spray damage is most severe on the side of the plant nearest the highway.

The severity of plant damage depends upon the type of salt and other factors. Calcium chloride, potassium chloride and magnesium chloride are less harmful to plants than sodium chloride. The degree of salt damage also depends upon the amount of salt applied, soil type, amount of rainfall, direction of run-off and prevailing winds.

The condition and type of plant material is also important. Healthy, vigorous plants are more tolerant of salt than poorly growing specimens. Bur oak, honeylocust, northern catalpa, Kentucky coffeetree, horse chestnut and Norway maple are tolerant of soil-borne salt, while sugar maple, American linden, Canada hemlock and white pine are sensitive to soil salt.

Salt Injury Prevention

Homeowners can minimize salt damage by using deicing salts prudently. Before applying salt, wait until the precipitation has ended and remove as much of the ice and snow as possible. Use deicing salts at rates sufficient to loosen ice and snow from driveways and sidewalks, then remove the loosened ice and snow with a shovel. (Deicing salts need to be applied at much higher rates to completely melt ice and snow.) Mix salt with sand or another abrasive material. Fifty pounds of sand mixed with one pound of salt works effectively.

Avoid piling salt-laden snow and ice around trees and shrubs. While the amount of salt applied to major roadways can not be controlled, steps can be taken to minimize damage. As soon as the ground thaws in early spring, heavily water areas where salt accumulates over winter. A thorough soaking should help flush the salt from the root zone of plants. If possible, alter the drainage pattern so winter run-off drains away from ornamental plants. When planting trees near major streets or highways, select salt tolerant tree species.

Deicing salts are both good and bad. Judicious use of deicing salts helps insure safe travel conditions for pedestrians and motorists and minimizes damage to landscape plants and the environment.



Gardening Chore Guide

December - *(It's not too late.)*

- Refill bird feeders
- Request seed catalogs
- Purchase 2020 ISU Garden Calendar
- Browse gardening books at bookstore
- Gently remove heavy snow from evergreen boughs
- Put ferns on pebble trays to increase humidity
- Avoid wetting leaves of African violets

January

- Mix sand with deicing salts when treating sidewalks and driveways
- Cover new perennials with Christmas tree boughs
- Order flower and vegetable seeds
- Place ferns & orchids on pebble trays to raise humidity
- Rotate houseplants to prevent one-sided growth
- Check stored bulbs; discard any that are rotting
- Wait until spring to fertilize houseplants.
- Check stored bulbs and roots of cannas, dahlias, and tuberous begonias and discard any that are discolored or rotting
- Try starting seeds of herbs (such as parsley or basil) for a windowsill garden

February

- Check houseplants for insects; apply insecticidal soap when necessary
- Order Valentine's Day flowers
- Frequently change water in vases of cut flowers
- Sow geranium seeds indoors
- Check trees and shrubs for rabbit damage
- Begin pruning fruit trees
- Cut back leggy or overgrown houseplants
- Make plans for your spring garden. Be sure to rotate

Jasper County Master Gardeners to Host 2020 Winter Webcast Series (3 classes)

6:00—7:00 pm

ISU Extension Office, 550 N 2nd Ave W.
Newton, Iowa

"Iowa Weather"

February 4

With a changing climate, Iowa will be warmer and wetter. State climatologist Dr. Justin Glisan from the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship will share what people can do to adapt to changing growing conditions.

"Bring Kids in the Garden"

March 10

State Master Gardener Coordinator Susan DeBlicke wants adults to help get youth outdoors. She'll share ideas for Master Gardener volunteer project sites and landscape design tips.

"Iowa's Botanists"

April 7

Love native plants? Deborah Lewis is the curator of the Ada Hayden Herbarium. She'll present on the early Iowa botanists, introduce the herbarium, and share her favorite native plants.

All webcasts count towards Master Gardener continuing education hours.

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Do you enjoy gardening?



You should consider becoming a Master Gardener!

Master Gardeners are trained volunteers who share a love of gardening, an enthusiasm for learning, and a commitment to helping others. Prior gardening knowledge not required! Information on becoming a Master Gardener can be found at:

<https://www.extension.iastate.edu/mastergardener/become-master-gardener>

Jasper County ISU Extension and Outreach is offering the Master Gardener series beginning August 25, 2020

For more Information,
contact Carol at 641-792-6433 or campc@iastate.edu

Learn It! Grow It ! Teach it!

Upcoming Events:

Jan 1		Office Closed for New Year's Day
Feb 4	6:00 pm	Master Gardener Winter Webcast, "Iowa Weather"
	7:00 pm	Master Gardener Meeting - Donation Garden Planning
March 10	6:00 pm	Master Gardener Winter Webcast, "Bring Kids in the Garden"
	7:00 pm	Master Gardener Meeting
April 7	6:00 pm	Master Gardener Winter Webcast, "Iowa's Botanists"
	7:00 pm	Master Gardener Meeting

Weather Announcements: If the weather is inclement or forecast to become inclement during the event, the event will likely be postponed/canceled. To confirm if an event is being held, please call our office 641-792-6433 (during office hours), check our Facebook pages, or listen to KCOB 95.9 radio weather announcements.



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- *Iowa State University Extension and Outreach—Jasper County*
- *Jasper County Master Gardeners*

Questions? Contact:

Carol Camp
Program Coordinator for Horticulture
641-792-6433
campc@iastate.edu

Jasper County Office Hours
Monday-Thursday 8:00 am—4:30 pm
Friday 8:00 am -1:00 pm