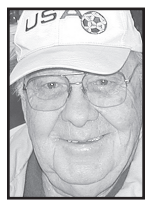


Homegrown cantaloupe's a crop that's unpredictable yet wonderful

My taste buds remind me this time of year that they are patiently awaiting the cantaloupe harvest. Just yesterday, one of them jabbed me in the tongue and said, "Hey, old man, how about some cantaloupe one of these days - or are you going to make excuses about why you didn't grow any this year?"

Or something like that. Taste buds seem to have a way of coming alive at the very sight of a ripe cantaloupe, and one of these days, barring another stock market sell off, I'm going to make them very happy. I can't remember having such a good looking cantaloupe patch. When it's time to vote at my house, it's always a close race as to whether we would rather have a fresh ripe tomato, or a half of an Ambrosia cantaloupe for dinner. Isn't it amazing how some of your garden crops produce so well



Kay Melia

• The Gardener

one year, and then are nearly failures in other years? In my garden for instance, last year tomatoes, sweet corn, and onions produced sizable crops. This year, the potatoes, peppers, and cantaloupe are extremely impressive. The only thing thing you can seem to be certain of is the zucchini, both hills of it.

But indeed, my cantaloupes are thriving this year, and I haven't the slightest idea why. Could be a little more heat and humidity this year, or maybe the soil was in better shape.

I plant two varieties of cantaloupe each year. Without fail, there

are always a few hills of Ambrosia, now the nation's largest seller of seed. You'll never find an Ambrosia melon at the supermarket, because they do not ship well, and as a result, commercial growers avoid them like the plague. Such a shame.

In the last few years, I have planted a relatively new melon introduced by Burpee, called Early Hybrid Crenshaw. Listen closely - you will never find a melon with such a delightfully perfect taste as this Crenshaw. What a breakthrough! It's a 90-day melon, grows to 10 or 12 pounds, and changes to a bright yellow color when ripe. It is truly a fantastic melon.

Cantaloupes were introduced in America in 1494 when Christopher Columbus brought them over from Spain and Italy. The fragrant melon was named after the Italian

town of Cantalupo and flourished for years in the area of Greece and Turkey. Here in America, the Arkansas River valley of Colorado was among the first to grow them commercially in about 1895. It was there where the Rocky Ford cantaloupe rose to national prominence.

In my humble opinion, you will be much more successful growing them if you plant the seed and avoid setting out transplants. Cantaloupe, like other plants from the cucurbit family, dislike someone messing around with their roots. Plant the seed when the soil reaches 60-65 degrees in the spring, and avoid the transplants.

Satisfy your taste buds as you can do no other way. Just have a bite of wonderful home grown cantaloupe.



Holly Ann and Chad Michael Baalman

June ceremony unites Oakley, Sterling grads

Holly Ann Anthony of Sterling and Chad Michael Baalman of Oakley were married on Saturday, June 11, 2011, at St. Paul's Catholic Church in Lyons with Father Dan Lorimer officiating.

The bride is the daughter of Kent and Cindy Anthony of Sterling. She is the granddaughter of Dean and Marie Mantooth of Hutchinson and Earl and Norma Anthony of Sterling.

The groom is the son of Duane and Michaela Baalman of Oakley. He is the grandson of LeeAnn and the late Joe Rehmer Sr. of Grinnell and the late Johnnie and Ruth Baalman of Oakley.

The bride was given in marriage by her father.

Matrons of honor were sisters of the bride Kristen Howie, Maize, and Janie Brokenicky, Manhattan. Bridesmaids were Megan Baalman, the groom's sister, Melanie Errebo, Hugoton, and Randi Dierksen, Sterling.

Best men were brothers of the groom Eric Baalman, Quinter, and Austin Baalman, Oakley. Groomsmen were Keith Schaller, Haysville, Trent Byquist, Salina, and Jason Winter, Chicago.

Shaylee Baalman, Quinter, niece of the groom, was flower girl. Ringbearer was Trent Blackwell, Salina, cousin of the groom.

Candlelighters were Julie Dohrmann, Tulsa, cousin of the bride, and Rachel Bachman, Wichita.

Lectors were Amanda Baalman, Quinter, sister-in-law of the groom, and the Rev. Dick Redding of Ciudad Mante, Mexico, uncle of the bride.

Guests were seated by Adrian Howie and Cole Brokenicky, brothers-in-law of the bride, and Shawn Taddiken.

Following the ceremony was a dinner, reception and dance at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish Hall in south Hutchinson.

The bride graduated from Sterling High School and Bethel College in Newton. She has a degree in elementary education and is a first grade teacher in Valley Center.

The groom graduated from Oakley High School and Kansas State University with a degree in human nutrition. He will complete the requirements for secondary science education in December.

The couple is living in Wichita after honeymooning in Ocho Rios, Jamaica.

Stressed lawns may be dormant or dying

If central U.S. lawns are looking faded or patchy and increasingly wheat-colored, that's because most area homeowners grow cool-season turfs - tall fescue or Kentucky bluegrass.

Unless irrigated regularly, those turfs normally go dormant in summer. But this summer's weather has been so extreme that even some well-watered lawns are now slipping into dormancy, said Rodney St. John, K-State Research and Extension turfgrass specialist.

"Lawn management needs to be in survival mode, not problem-fixing mode. Excess thatch or compacted soil may be making the situation worse, but it can wait until fall. Right now, we need to concentrate on keeping grass alive," St. John said. "What that means in terms of watering, however, depends on how ready the turf was for little to no rain and triple-digit heat."

This is the second year in a row Kansas lawns have faced a stressful summer, he said. Ironically, the stress has been hardest on lawns that homeowners babied through spring.

"If your lawn is strong and healthy when it enters dormancy, you can quit watering the weeds. That kind of turf can go up to a month between waterings and still keep its crowns alive," St. John explained. "But, if you watered the lawn incorrectly through spring - too much or too often - shutting the turf off 'cold turkey' could cause damage or death."

"That's what happened to many lawns last year. They had short-short roots, resulting from too-frequent spring rains. They weren't prepared for the weather's rapid turn to high heat and drought. Their root systems couldn't supply enough water for plant growth and cooling - enough to allow the plants to enter dormancy gracefully. So, many turf plants died."

For homeowners whose lawn is suffering now, he suggests waiting about seven days after its last good drink and then irrigating.

"If the lawn still has some green then, you can continue watering, or you can ease it into dormancy - your choice," the horticultur-

Be slow to mow

Mowing during extremely hot weather adds to lawns' stress, according to Rodney St. John, turfgrass specialist with K-State Research and Extension.

"When it's as hot as the weather was this July, mowing will even stress out warm-season turfs, such as bermuda, zoysia and buffalo grass. But, their stress isn't nearly as severe as what happens to cool-season grasses," St. John said. "Fortunately, grass blades don't elongate much in hot weather, so you may be able to put off mowing until the temperature cools a bit ... into the lower 90s or upper 80s F."

When homeowners do mow, they should set their mower at the high end of their turf's recommended cutting-height range, the horticulturist added. For warm season turfs, that height is about 2 inches. For cool-season grasses, it's 3.75 to 4 inches tall.

ist said. "If you decide on dormancy or your turf already looks dormant, you should extend the interval between waterings several days at a time until you're on a two-week schedule. Your lawn probably won't be tough enough to go any longer than that this year."

In general, he said, the rule of thumb for lawns in Kansas is to ensure they get an inch of water per week. But, that rule varies in line with weather extremes.

"Given this summer's weather in most of the state, maintaining a green lawn and preventing dormancy required applying about an inch of water every three to four days," St. John said. "In contrast, when the weather cools in fall, that rate will decrease, eventually reaching an inch every couple of weeks."

Watering: How Deep, How Often
The turfgrass specialist has posted several

short "how-to" videos on the Web at www.ksuturf.org/blog/2011/07/turf-and-landscape-irrigation-videos/. They demonstrate such tricks of the trade as:

- Calculating when a lawn actually needs water, using local rain and evapotranspiration data reported daily by such services as the Kansas Weather Data Library (www.ksre.ksu.edu/wdl/).
- Measuring how deeply water has soaked in.
- Checking whether a sprinkler or irrigation system is distributing water evenly to all parts of the lawn.
- Figuring how long a particular watering system must run to deposit an inch of water.
- Reducing the water lost to evapotranspiration, as well as the odds for turf diseases.

St. John said the videos emphasize two rules of thumb for turf health: 1) water deeply and infrequently (i.e., promote deep root growth) and 2) monitor your soil moisture and the weather to estimate how much you should irrigate.

If lawns are at risk now, their owners may very well have been breaking one or both rules, he said.

In fighting to save their lawn, however, homeowners must not neglect any thin or bare spots, the horticulturist said. Spots that look like goners need moisture as much, if not more than turfed areas.

"To understand why, just place your hand on some green grass. Then place your hand on dried-out turf. The difference in temperature will be considerable," St. John said. "In fact, dormant or dead turf's heat can bake any adjoining green grass. To counter that, you have to water properly everywhere."

K-State Research and Extension has a turfgrass information site on the Web at www.ksuturf.com/. It contains links to a variety of lawn-related materials, as well as the blog for turfgrass professionals that St. John maintains with K-State plant pathologist Megan Kennelly.

Storm damages famous tree

MANSFIELD, Ohio (AP) - A storm has destroyed half of an Ohio oak tree that played a key role near the end of "The Shawshank Redemption."

The 1994 movie was filmed in an around an old prison in Mansfield in north-central Ohio, and the tree is where Morgan Freeman's character finds money and a note left by Tim Robbins' character.

Malabar Farm State Park manager Louis Andres tells the *News*

Journal of Mansfield (<http://bit.ly/nMG68r>) the tree was hit July 29 by straight-line winds that split it down its rotted middle and took out one side. The tree is on private farmland adjacent to the park.

Local convention and visitors bureau president Lee Tasseff calls the damage "tragic." He says the oak is a sentimental stop for "Shawshank" fans drawn to the film's locations.

Corrections

The Colby Free Press wants to maintain an accurate record of our town. Please report any error or lack of clarity in a news story to us at 462-3963.

Markets

Quotes as of close of previous business day

Hi-Plains Co-op	
Wheat (bushel)	\$7.26
Corn (bushel)	\$7.17
Milo (hundredweight)	\$12.07
Soybeans (bushel)	\$12.09

sidewalk sale

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Rexford Couple to Celebrate 50 years together

The children of Jay and Nancy Dahl wish to invite you to help celebrate their parents 50th Wedding Anniversary. A come and go open house will be held on August 20, 2011 at the Rexford Community Church basement from 2-4. The couple request no gifts your presence is gift enough.

We love you mom and dad.
Jon and Tina Anderson of Goodland, Tim Dahl of Rexford and Bob and Linda Dunn of Lyndon.



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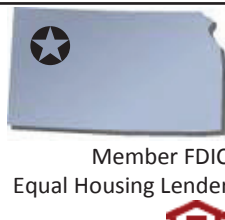
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- ✪ Excellent Credit ✪
- ✪ Conventional Loan, 80% Loan to Value ✪
- ✪ Single Family Residence ✪

Bridge Club

Meadow Lake bridge winners for Tuesday were Margaret Denner, first; Mary Molstad, second;

Jean Snyder and Lyle Worthy, tie for third; Gail Vacca, fifth; and Gladys Fischer, sixth.

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