



Johnson's Garden Talk

Lawn and garden information for the friends and customers of Johnson's Garden Centers

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December 2003



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Garden Tips

Marty Johnson

President, Johnson's Garden Centers & Kansas Certified Nursery Professional

As we look around these days, we see a lot of Christmas and holiday items. As retailers, we are often criticized for the commercialization of Christmas. As a Christian retailer, I am glad that we have a chance to offer items for sale that celebrate our Lord and Savior's birth. There are many holidays and celebrations during the year that have nothing to do with religion and this one time we can publicly display Christian or religious items, so let's do so without second thoughts. I'll get off of my soapbox for now.

Christmas Traditions

If you haven't already done so, I encourage you to start family Christmas traditions. Growing up, I remember the nativity scene that my parents had in our home. Every Christmas season my parents would add a piece or two to our nativity set. Today, this set is still put out during the Christmas season.

In fact, ones just like it are on display all year at Johnson's Garden Centers with our Fontanini® line of nativities. The Fontanini family of Italy makes nativity pieces from unbreakable polymers that will last a lifetime. These pieces are perfect for telling the Christmas story to little ones who can handle and play with the pieces without the worry of breakage. Your nativity set can be as simple as the Holy Family or as elaborate as you want to make it. With Fontanini, you can create your own town village if you so desire.

Planting Dutch Bulbs

Gardeners (*like myself*) still have a few projects to finish outside. One that I need to complete is my bulb planting. Even though we've had cold weather, spring-flowering bulbs can still be planted. I have planted bulbs as late as the first week of February and still had success. I would, however, encourage you to complete your bulb planting before then if possible. The most important thing is to keep bulbs well irrigated. If we get adequate rain or snow this winter, no additional moisture is required. Adequate is the key, but how much is adequate? If you can dig down to the bulbs and the soil is moist, then you have adequate moisture, if it's not moist, add water.

Super-Green Lawn Secret

This past spring, the lawn at our 13th Street store was as dark green as any lawn I have ever seen. We always use ferti•lome Winterizer and have great results on our fescue turf. The thing that really made the turf dark green was an application of Natural Guard Soil Activator. This product does not add nitrogen for greening, but adds naturally occurring humates. Soil Activator helps the Winterizer do a better job, by taking up and using more nutrients and micro-nutrients. Each bag of Natural

Guard Soil Activator covers 2,000 sq. ft. Try this product and if you don't think it does wonders for your lawn then I'll give your money back.

Fall & Winter Weed Control

Next spring, we'll see many of the broadleaf weeds blooming all around us. The most common weeds we deal with are dandelion, henbit and chickweed. The "Big 3" (*as I like to refer to them*) are very easy to control at this time of the year. The ferti•lome company has a new product called Weed Free Zone which works in much cooler weather than other broadleaf weed killers. It also works much more quickly, usually in just a couple of weeks to control the "Big 3" and also those harder to kill weeds such as clover. If you see those tiny weeds showing their first couple of leaves in your lawn then I suggest Weed Free Zone to prevent those weeds from putting on a show of yellow and blue flowers next spring.

Self-Guided Greenhouse Tour!

I encourage you to come in to take a walk through our greenhouses. I don't think that there is any time of the year that the greenhouses have more color than they do right now. The Christmas poinsettia, which is a native plant to Mexico, makes a great plant for indoor color at this time of the year. Poinsettias make a nice houseplant after the first of the year, and then a nice patio plant outside next summer. Be sure to keep the poinsettia fertilized with Daniels Plant Food on a weekly basis. Also, to keep the plant from getting too tall next summer, get out the pruners and give it a close cut (*back to about 6"*) when you put it outside, then let it grow back again.

Enjoy the Christmas season, don't let the hectic pace cause too much stress, and enjoy the important people in your life. ■