

## Winterizing roses and planting Christmas Amaryllis

### Time to think about winter stock water

Well the fall to winter temperature roller coaster has started. Even though it's subfreezing one week and in the 70s the next, we all



**Darl Henson**  
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know that warmer weather will soon be a thing of the past for a while and we'd better make some preparations.

Many of today's shrub roses in Kansas are pretty hardy souls, but Kansas State University horticulture experts remind us that some species still need a little bit of tender care heading into the winter months.

For example, the hybrid tea varieties have certain species in their ancestry that originated in the warm climate of southern China. Those roses need protection to reliably survive Kansas winters.

To help protect those particular rose varieties, gardeners should plan to mound soil or compost about 8 to 10 inches high around each plant. If you're using soil, bring it in from another source or area of the garden. Do not pull it from between plants because this could damage the rose roots and you would actually be reducing the insulating layer where soil is removed and make roots more susceptible to cold.

Experts say the mounding should be done by Thanksgiving. Then, after the ground has frozen, you should add four inches of straw mulch, leaves or hay for further protection. Spread more soil on top of that mulch to keep it in place. If the straw mulch is added before the ground freezes chances increase that mice may invade and feed on the roses over the winter. The purpose of these coverings is not only to moderate the cold, but also to prevent warm days during the winter or early spring from stimulating growth that is tender to cold weather and could be damaged by a subsequent freeze.

In addition, strong winter winds can damage the crown of the rose plant or loosen surrounding soil. To protect the plants from strong winds, rose canes should be pruned to 36 inches tall and tie plants together.

Next spring, coverings need to be removed before new growth starts. If soil was used for mounding, remove it from the area so that the level of soil stays constant from year to year. Compost can be spread out around the plant and used as mulch. Wait until the ground thaws or the tops may begin growing before the roots can provide water.

As the music in the stores is now telling us, Christmas is just around the bend. For those ready to get into that festive mood, now's a great time to plant amaryllis bulbs for those wanting blooms for Christmas. The amaryllis is a tender bulb that is ready to bloom when purchased. The genus name for this plant is Hippeastrum, which means "horse star," an ap-

propriate name for a plant that produces massive blooms as much as 8 to 10 inches across. These plants can produce 3 to 4 blooms on a 1- to 2-foot stem. Often, a second flower stalk follows the first at about the time the flowers on the first stem fade. The leaves usually start to appear when the flowers begin to open.

Amaryllis bulbs can be huge – approaching the size of a grapefruit. The larger the bulb, the larger the flowers and the more expensive the bulb. Regardless of size, amaryllis likes tight quarters. Place in a pot only 1 to 2 inches larger in diameter than the bulb. About half of the bulb should remain exposed. Hold the bulb so the roots hang down into the pot, and add potting mix. Firm the mix around the roots carefully so that they are not snapped off. Water thoroughly and place the plant in a warm, sunny location. Amaryllis likes day temperatures in the 70s and night temperatures in the 60s. The flower bud may start to appear right away or the plant may remain dormant for a period of time, but eventually all mature bulbs do bloom. Move the plant to a cooler location and out of direct sunlight when the flower buds begin to show color so the flowers last longer. Amaryllis can remain in bloom for about a month.

As beef producers manage the herd in dropping temperatures this winter, they are sure to have adequate forage on hand. Kansas State University Beef Cattle Institute experts stress that now is the time to make sure the source of adequate good quality drinking water is also available and livestock watering systems are set up for full time access to clean, drinkable water.

Cattle will typically drink about 1 gallon of water for every 100 pounds of weight they maintain per day, and lactating cows will consume more water than dry cows.

Veterinarians and nutritionists remind producers that water is the most important nutrient for overall livestock health and production. It is important for cattle and other livestock to have access to clean water at all times.

The experts say now is the time to consider the size of the tank needed to keep the water flowing ice free this winter. For some, that may mean investing in frost-free watering systems. Such an investment in a freeze-proof waterer can be expensive initially, but the savings in time and labor of breaking ice may be well worth it. The cattle's consumption of water will also increase if the water is free flowing at all times.

Even with frost-free systems, livestock producers are reminded they need to clean them periodically.

Waterers can get hay debris and other saliva and dirt in them throughout the winter, so be sure to clean them often.

One other consideration is that if cattle are drinking water from a well, it is advised to have the water tested periodically to make sure it is safe for livestock consumption.

Everyone have a safe and enjoyable Thanksgiving holiday. If you meet with friends and family, be sure to practice current COVID-19 prevention protocol including social distancing and wearing a mask when appropriate.

Harvest is winding down or already completed. Cattle are turned out on winter pasture. And I'm sure some have already selected their turkey for Thanksgiving.

### Insight



**Greg Doering**  
Kansas Farm  
Bureau

Yes, the end of 2020 is approaching fast — thankfully, mercifully.

Like the previous 101 years, this one won't end without Kansas Farm Bureau's annual meeting. Normally we'd gather hundreds of members in person to celebrate another harvest, recognize agricultural leaders and conduct the business of this great organization.

We'll still do all that good stuff at our 102nd annual meeting Dec. 3-4, with the slight change of beaming the workshops, speakers, panel discussions, general sessions and more to your living room, tractor cab or barn.

The virtual sessions on Thursday and Friday will allow all Farm Bureau members in Kansas to participate for free, including Vance Crowe's keynote address to lead off the meeting Thursday morning. Members can view the annual meeting agenda and register at [www.kfb.org/annualmeeting](http://www.kfb.org/annualmeeting).

Other highlights include an appearance from U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, an update from Andrew Walmsley on American Farm Bureau Activities in Washington, D.C. and a townhall with our newly elected federal officials.

Additionally, there's time set aside for networking, chatting about sessions and providing feedback. It's similar to what would happen in the hallways and around meals at a regular convention.

I won't try to sell you on the notion technology will fully replicate the KFB annual meeting experience because it can't. However, like so many other things this year, it's the safest way for members and staff to mark the trials and tribulations of 2020 and honor the achievements of agriculture and its practitioners.

Believe me, I know social distancing, mask wearing, avoiding public spaces have become tiresome chores. But we're getting closer to the end of this malignancy. Just last week promising news of a vaccine was announced. Others are in the works as well. With the aid of science, hopefully this will be the first and last annual meeting held over computer screens.

The fact is right now, there's no good way to bring hundreds of people together from every corner of the state and have them gather together

for an extended amount of time. Significant modifications have been made to allow delegates to conduct KFB business when they gather on Saturday.

Voting delegates will debate and adopt policy statements for 2021, elect the KFB president and board members from even-numbered Farm Bureau districts. Delegates will attend in-person at one of the 10 hubs corresponding to their district. Attendance on Saturday is limited to KFB staff and voting delegates. These will be small groups with masks and plenty of space to spread out.

The logistics behind this year's annual meeting are mind boggling, and I've been impressed with how many solutions, as imperfect as they may be, are available to help connect everyone at a distance. The show will go on with or without you, but I strongly urge you to take a look at the agenda, register and make plans to join us. There's so much to see, learn and do, I know you'll find something to grab your attention. I hope to see you there. And, of course, as with every other virtual event this year, pants are optional.

—*"Insight" is a weekly column published by Kansas Farm Bureau, the state's largest farm organization whose mission is to strengthen agriculture and the lives of Kansans through advocacy, education and service.*

## 2020 Farm Service Agency county committee elections under way

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has mailed ballots for the Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committee elections to eligible farmers and ranchers across the country. To be counted, ballots must be returned to the local FSA county office or postmarked by Dec. 7.

"FSA has more than 7,000 county committee members nationwide who serve their communities by providing input on our programs at the local level," said FSA Administrator Richard Fordyce. "We value their knowledge and judgment as decisions are made about the services we provide, including disaster and safety-net programs."

Each committee has three to 11 elected members who serve three-year terms of office, and at least one seat is up for election each year. Newly elected committee members will take office Jan. 1.

County committee members help FSA make important decisions on its commodity support programs, conservation programs, indemnity and disaster programs, and emergency programs and eligibility.

Producers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program to be eligible to vote in the county committee election.

A cooperating producer is someone who has provided information

about their farming or ranching operation(s) but may not have applied or received FSA program benefits. Also, producers who supervise and conduct the farming operations of an entire farm, but are not of legal voting age, may be eligible to vote.

Producers can find out if their local administrative area is up for election and if they are eligible to vote by contacting their local FSA county office. Eligible voters who did not receive a ballot in the mail can request one from their local FSA county office. Visit [fsa.usda.gov/elections](http://fsa.usda.gov/elections) for more information.

## Paige

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team. His two decades in EMS brought a clinical perspective that elevated every aspect of cleaning and infection control throughout the organization.

Recognizing Toby's leadership and commitment through the COVID-19 pandemic, the CHS staff elected him Coffey Health System Health Care Worker of the Year in May 2020.

"In my short time here, it is abundantly clear why the CHS staff nominated Toby," said CHS Chief Executive Officer Jeremy Clingenpeel. "He is the embodiment of professionalism, compassion, and leadership."

Toby's clinical background and meticulous nature made him an integral part of the Infection Control/COVID-19 team. He led all CHS facilities in proper procedures to prevent the spread and cross-contamination. He voluntarily assumed the responsibility of front-line duties to clean the rooms of positive COVID-19 patients so that other staff members would not be unnecessarily exposed—even if it meant coming in at night, on a weekend, or during a holiday.

"Toby's extraordinary work through the pandemic reached ev-

eryone throughout the organization," said Chief Operating Officer James Higgins. "Several departments volunteered to clean their workspaces so that Environmental Services could focus on COVID efforts. It would have been easy to simply check those departments off his list, but Toby made sure that everyone was trained to assure safety. He conducted 'walk-throughs' to point out high-touch areas, provided appropriate cleaning products, and demonstrated exactly how to clean each surface. His attention to detail and concern for others is vital in containing the disease spread."

Since taking on the Environmental Services Supervisor position in 2018, overall patient satisfaction scores related to hospital environment and cleanliness have risen significantly. CHS was ranked in the 74th percentile for Overall Hospital Environment in 2015. When Toby took on the role of Environmental Services Supervisor scores climbed to the 97th percentile in 2018 and the 98th percentile in 2019. CHS is on track to be in the 99th percentile in 2020.

He meticulously monitored cleaning chemicals to ensure adequate supply and appropriate use, while also educating all staff (not just environmental services, but ALL staff) on how and when to use products in

their workspace. Most importantly, Toby was a calm, positive presence throughout the surge in COVID-19 patients at CHS. His professionalism, kindness, and willingness to help at any moment brought reassurance and confidence to all of CHS staff during a very trying time.

The three other recipients are: Lynda Cross, director of nursing, Nemaha Valley Community Hospital, Seneca; Paula Miller, clinical quality assurance manager, The University of Kansas Health System, Kansas City; and Janelle Williamson, nurse practitioner, LMH Health, Lawrence.

—*Tracy Campbell is director of marketing for Coffey Health System.*

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## National Farm-City Week

### November 18-25

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