

To say that we have had a wet spring would be an understatement to say the least. This can be a concern for homeowners and their landscapes. I found a few pieces of advice from Ward Upham, K-State Research and Extension's horticulture department to share with you this week that address a few concerns you may have. As always, if you have any questions, you can call me at 620-793-1910.

Too Wet to Mow the Lawn

What do you do when the lawn can't be cut because of constant rain? The best thing to do is to set your mower as high as possible and bring it down in steps. It is always best never to take more than one third of the grass blade off at one time. If more is taken, the plant reacts by using stored energy reserves to quickly send up new growth. This reduces the amount of energy available for the plant to deal with stress or damage done by insects or disease. However, sometimes it is just not possible to keep the "one-third rule." In such cases, cut as high as possible even though it may mean you are cutting off more than one third of the blade. Bring the height down gradually by cutting more often and at progressively lower heights until you reach the target height.

Trees in flood

Trees differ markedly in their ability to withstand flooding. Some trees have mechanisms in place to provide oxygen to the roots of plants with water saturated soils and others do not. However, most trees will maintain health if flood waters recede in 7 days or less. It also helps if water is flowing rather than stagnant. If the roots of sensitive trees are flooded for long periods of time, damage will occur including leaf drop, iron chlorosis, leaf curl, branch dieback, and in some cases, tree death. Another danger of flooding is the deposition of sediment. An additional layer of silt 3 inches or more can also restrict oxygen to the roots. If possible, remove deep layers of sediment as soon as conditions permit. This is especially important for small or recently transplanted trees.

Try to avoid any additional stress to the trees this growing season. Ironically, one of the most important practices is to water trees if the weather turns dry. Flooding damages roots and therefore the root system is less efficient in making use of available soil water. Timely waterings are vital to a tree's recovery. Also be diligent in removing dead or dying branches that may serve as an entry point for disease organisms or insect pests.

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