K·STATE Research and Extension | Meadowlark District

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Native Grass Establishment

As fertilizer input costs for cool season forages have increased, so has interest in other forage options. If you're thinking a perennial forage, native grass might have come to mind. There are lots of great resources for supplies of native grass seed, planting equipment, and best management practices for seeding (*Establishing Native Grasses* –available upon request from any District Office or online at: https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/mf2291.pdf), but attention first needs to be given to whether it's even the right option.

Fertility requirements and grazing/haying management for warm season native grasses are slightly different than they are for cool season grasses. While you may save input costs on the fertility side, you may also give up acres from a stocking rate standpoint. The grazing window is different, too, so thinking may have to change when it comes to turn out times and end of season rest. Grazing/haying height management will be different, as will production. Native grasses simply can't be managed exactly the same as we're used to for cool season species.

Despite their differences, warm season native grasses can be a really great addition/complement to a forage system. If you've got acreage on which you are considering a species change, native grass (or native grass/forb) plantings can be a good option to consider not only for their grazing and haying qualities, but wildlife as well. The reference mentioned above is a great one to get you started.

Fruit Trees Frost Tolerance

If we're going to put time and effort in to planting/watering/pruning/disease control/etc… a fruit tree, we want to see it produce fruit. Unfortunately, Kansas springs can wreak havoc with that from a temperature standpoint, with apricot and peach trees the most vulnerable. While the tree itself often survives, fruit buds may not, compromising fruit production along the way.

If you're in the market for apricot of peach trees for a new planting, spend some time in varietal selection. Virginia Tech research in the 90's (https://tinyurl.com/y35ntxau) showed a maximum of four days difference between early and late varieties – but in some years, that's all that's needed. For apricots, those in the study considered late blooming were *Hungarian Rose, Tilton and Harlayne* (*Harglow* is also considered late-blooming).

There are actually *two* characteristics of peaches to consider when evaluating potential damage: bloom time and fruit bud hardiness (ability to withstand late frosts rather than just extreme low winter temperatures). Later bloomers include *China Pearl, Encore, Intrepid, Contender and Risingstar* (http://contentdm.nmsu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/AgCircs/id/73025) . Another excellent cultivar from the standpoint of cold hardiness when in flower is *Intrepid.*

Culturally, try to keep plantings on hills, so cold air can 'drain' to lower elevations. Protected locations are important as well, allowing for a warmer micro-climate than exposed locations. Unfortunately, damage may still occur. It's all part of the challenge (and frustration?) of growing apricots and peaches in Kansas.