

Is Patience a Restricted Use Product?

AGRI-VIEWS

by Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent

I was on the phone recently helping someone with a tough to control perennial plant. They were hoping for an easy solution where there wasn't one. I told them that it was going to come down to Roundup and patience. The immediate response was, "Is patience a restricted use product or can anyone buy it?" Realizing immediately that my attempt at humor had failed I straightened out the homeowner about what I meant.

I hung up the phone, chuckled a moment but then started thinking. Restricted Use Products are those pesticides that you need a private or commercial pesticide applicator's license to purchase and use. These are products that require a bit more understanding of pesticides to make sure that the environment, or sometimes the applicator, is not harmed in the mixing and use of the product. It requires studying and passing a test to receive an applicator's license.

As a society, perhaps even as a global society, we have become very impatient. We want things right now. You can see evidence of this everywhere around us. We want it fast, easy and cheap. Instant gratification is no longer quick enough. What I can tell you is that Mother Nature doesn't care. Mother Nature works at her own pace under the rules that she sets. She doesn't care that you want fresh tomatoes just as soon as possible. If she wants snow on April 20th, she'll deliver snow. I see many impatient gardeners. They decide on a moment's notice that they want to do something and proceed with their impulse without looking seriously at their idea and putting it into a realistic timetable.

How many times have we heard someone talking about a person with "champagne taste but a beer budget?" Many homeowners and gardeners take this same approach only with time being the commodity in question. As a society we are so very impatient. We want the golf course lawn spending 30 minutes a week on it. Have you ever noticed those beautiful golf courses and how many people they have working behind the scenes on a daily basis? Beautiful lawns and landscaping are time intensive. They are not for the impatient gardener.

Several times in the past month I have found myself working in the yard or garden on tedious items. Hand weeding and cleaning out the peony beds that I neglected to do last fall was about a four hour project. Later I was meticulously cleaning dead wood out of a couple of rose bushes. A lot of that was winterkill from those ugly February temperatures, but some was just helping to shape future growth of the rose. I spent a lot of time on those rose bushes but they look so much better now. Currently I'm spending time hand weeding my garlic as it makes it's final six week push to maturity.

A patient gardener takes the time to learn about what they need to be doing. They won't use shortcuts that are of questionable value. They find out if a certain plant will survive if it is planted in their yard. (Hint - just because a local store is selling some plant doesn't mean it's a good choice. They sell what people ask for. Check first before spending the money!) A patient gardener takes the time to modify and care for the soil in such a manner that the plants they are growing have the best chance of thriving.

Perhaps patience is a restricted use product. It shouldn't be, but I see a lot of folks without any, so either they don't know where to obtain it or they think it's beyond their reach. Don't be one of those gardeners. Take your time, do the work as it should be done, and the results will be properly rewarded.