

# 17 Common Mistakes Many Gardeners Make



There is no denying it, being a gardener can be a tough hobby, especially for the beginners. We all start off with such high hopes of seeing soaring crops and bountiful harvest.

Unfortunately, the reality is normally quite the opposite. But this shouldn't scare you to not venture into gardening as we all learn from the mistakes.

Just as there's no such thing as a perfect gardener, there's no perfect garden. So what are the Common Mistakes Many Gardeners Make?

Here is a compilation of the gardening mistakes made by many that you can learn from.

## 1. Not Doing A Soil Test

This is a prevalent mistake done by many gardeners; they assume their soil type fits all crops. A [soil test](#) can tell you the nutrients your soil needs and what it has in plenty. Too little nutrients can result in stunted plant growth. Too much can be fatal as well.

Beginners often make the mistakes of failing to carry out soil test. It's true that you'll have to wait to get results, but the waiting time will be worth it.

It'll pay off for a more bountiful harvest and successful garden. Most gardens fail to do well for very simple reasons. Therefore, it's always good to take simple preventive measures, like soil testing to be on the safe side.

## **2. Not Preparing The Beds and Taking Care Of The Soil**

Most of us, have committed this mistake more than once, some out of sheer laziness, and others out of ignorance.

When planting, we assume that since the seedling is small, the tiny hole that we make into the damp earth with our fingers will be enough for it.

But after the soil dries up, it becomes rock hard, and the roots of the young plant cannot penetrate well into the soil. The plant will end up having stunted growth.

You need to dig and double dig the garden beds and add plenty of leaf mold and compost to make the soil loose enough for proper root development and penetration.

Digging shouldn't be done when planting; it should be done before. If you don't want to dig deep, try growing in raised garden beds.

## **3. Leaving Out Soil Amendment**

One of the things we fail to take into consideration is the evolving nature of the soil. Just like living organisms, soil is living... it changes and evolves. The change is caused by fluctuations in the amount of rainfall, lack of drainage and soil runoff.

Checking your garden soil for mineral profile and pH level every planting season, and making necessary amendments a few weeks before the growing periods pays off.

You can also test again to make sure that all the conditions are perfect for the plants that you intend to plant.

Incorporating organic matter into the soil adds a modulating effect on it; the more humus the soil has, the less the fluctuations. Add cured and compost manure to your vegetable gardens to achieve high-quality harvest.

## 4. Miscalculating Fertilizer Needs

Too little, too much, wrong timing or type of fertilizer will not allow your plants to have vigorous growth and produce maximumly.

For instance, all plants require nitrogen, and applying nitrogen-rich fertilizer will make them grow vigorously - which is what you want for green vegetables like lettuce, cabbages, and chard.

That same amount of nitrogen, when applied on root vegetables will be fatal as it will cause excessive top growth at the expense of the root growth. Use the right fertilizer and know the timing.

## 5. Not Composting

Most people fail to add compost to their garden because of sheer ignorance or laziness.

Most gardeners often confuse compost with manure. [Compost](#) is made from the waste that has been collected, piled up and broken down... until it is ready to be added to the garden. It has been estimated that a cubic yard of compost is worth of \$562.

The rich, black resultant feed the plants, improves the soil structure, and prevents diseases. Compost manure can be an effective substitute for chemical fertilizer - but only for some plants.

Avoid using poultry (nitrogen rich) and horse manure on flowering plants, and never use any raw manure.

## 6. Overwatering And Shallow Watering

Overwatering is likened to showing excessive love to your plant. Most enthusiastic gardeners kill their plants by overwatering them.

Frequent watering may be applied to seedlings or cuttings as they becoming established. Once the plant has developed a proper root system, water them at systematic intervals.

Damping the plant may cause stress to the roots as they too, need to breathe. Toughen your plants by watering them in intervals. Too much watering can decrease the yield in some vegetables.

Shallow watering is another mistake committed by gardeners who water their plants using a handheld garden hose. Many gardeners give a nice shower to the plants and ignore the roots.

This explains why your plants look tired in the afternoon. Plants absorb most of their water through the roots. It's better to reduce the frequency of watering but water your plants deeply every time.

Use leaky hose watering or drip irrigation system to ensure deep watering.

## **7. Planting Sun Lovers In Shade**

We're well aware of the importance of sunlight to the plants; they use it to make their own food. But sometimes we get tempted to plant a flowering plant near a tree.

We may be overjoyed to see it growing vigorously, only to be disappointed by its low yield. The plant was making many leaves to maximize on capturing the limited sunlight, but it just wasn't enough.

There are some plants that have adapted to survive in shady regions, but if you plant sun-lovers in the shade, they just will not do well.

Most veggies and flowering plants thrive well in areas where they get continuous sunlight throughout the day.

## **8. Planting Out Of Season**

Many of us are victims of wrong timing. This may not be relevant for those in the tropics, but it is prevalent in the North where seasons are the order of every year.

Planting tender seedlings during the spring exposes them to frost. Summer flowers and cool season veggies should be planted in their respective times.

Listening to the advice of the local gardeners and follow the gardening calendar of your locality for best results.

## **9. Forgetting To Keep Up With Succession Planting**

Most farmers forgot to replace the plants they have harvested and one that they need to have all season. If you want to have a plant for the full season, plant it in succession.

Sow small amounts of seeds at short intervals for a continuous harvest. This mostly applies to fast maturing vegetables such as radishes.

They take 30 days or less to mature and you can be planting them on a monthly basis as you can harvest them for another 30 days without them losing their succulent and fresh nature.

## **10. Using Weed Killers In A Wrong Day**

You used herbicide in a garden that had been overgrown with weeds, only to find that the nearby flower bed is drying up too.

There are selective herbicides that affect the dicots weeds in the garden and spare the grass. However, the spray was innocently carried away by the wind to the garden with dicot plants growing in the flower garden too.

Also, spraying when the rain is nearing to pour will carry the chemicals to another garden. If you have to use chemical herbicides, apply them when is windless and sunny.

## **11. Planting Single Self-Sterile Plants**

There are some plants that grow well and even grow flowers only for all the flowers to wither off at some point. If you encounter this kind of plant, the only option is to get rid of it. A good example of self-sterile is a blueberry plant (although there are some that aren't).

For successful pollination, you need to plant two of the same type. However, in apple trees, you need two plants of different types to get fruit. Not only that, they need to have the same blooming period.

It becomes complex when the second apple tree produce sterile pollen, as that means you need a third tree in the garden. Therefore, when planting such kind of crops, you need to get help from knowledgeable individuals, or just stick to self-sterile varieties.

## **12. Scaring Away Pollinators With Pesticides**

You may be overly protective that you end up scaring away pollinators in the name of scaring away pests. Applying pesticides is handy... but a great mistake committed by many gardeners.

We are not talking about polluting the environment here, although this's an issue of great concern. If you get too few fruits and vegetables after squaringly applying water, pesticides, and fertilizer to your plants, then know that you may have scared off the pollinators.

## **13. Ordering Too Many Bulbs**

Most gardeners get tempted to stock up on bulbs because the catalogs offer amazing steals. But when you see your bulb plant encroaching into your annual beds and all the other places in the garden, then, know that you've overdone it.

Bulbs have a welcoming color as the season changes, but the flower burst show is all too short. If you want an all-the-year long enjoyment, plant perennial and annual plants.

## **14. Sowing Too Many Seeds**

This is the most frequent mistake committed by many gardeners. Many people think that the manufacturers are wrong to mention that tomatoes need the spacing of two feet.

Crowding your seed will greatly impact on your yield as the plants will be competing for nutrients and light. Don't be deceived to think that by sowing many seeds, you'll reap big.

## **15. Not Understanding The Fertility Requirements Of Different Plants**

You might be tempted to think that digging your lawn and planting your seeds is just enough. But, that's not the case as plants need food to grow and most of the times the soil in your garden doesn't have all the right requirements for plant growth.

However, before opting for chemical supplements, feed your soil with ample compost manure at the beginning of the growing season. For a healthy harvest, feed the soil, and not the plants.

## **16. Planting The Same Vegetable In The Same Place Year After Year**

Most people have an area designated for growing vegetables and ornamentals, but repeatedly growing plants of the same family such as tomatoes and tubers, in the same area, will turn out to be a costly mistake that you'll regret. Why is this so?

Diseases and pests colonize the area as most fungal blights, spots, and rusts are host specific. They remain in the soil waiting for the successive growing period. Plant rotation is the only ideal solution to breaking their lifecycle.

## **17. Not Cleaning The Garden**

Your garden needs to be clean to avoid the growth and multiplication of diseases and pests. Clean your garden on a weekly basis by pulling out the weeds and picking up the infected leaves and fallen foliage.

## **18. Not Providing Protection**

Crops need to be protected from invaders such as destructive birds. You can use an environ mesh to protect your crops from heavy winds and rains as well as pests.

Use a wire hoop to hold the environ mesh above the crop and ensure that the edges are well secured to the ground so that the insects cannot find their way inside.

## **19. Not Being Sure Of When To Plant**

Keep in mind that it's always good to plant early or during the middle of the spectrum, rather than at the end. Keep in mind the seasonal frosts and how they affect the plant. Make a plan with a planting schedule to avoid mistakes.

## **20. Underestimating The Weather**

During the spring, the weather condition is very unpredictable and, therefore, you have to be prepared to cover your plants with plastic bottles or row covers to keep them from freezing when the weather changes suddenly.

Avoid planting your summer plants too soon. The soil temperature affects the germination rate and percentage of plants like peppers and tomatoes.

Curb your impatience so that you can reap big.

## **21. Inviting Critters**

There are plants that send out an invitation once planted. For example, planting sweet corns or watermelons by the roadside will attract raccoons and squirrels.

Therefore, you need to fence your gardens well to keep off small rabbits and squirrels as well as sizeable mammals from invading your garden.

## **22. Not Growing The Crops You Eat**

It's good to plant crops that you have an appetite for. Planting things that you don't like to eat or you never consume will not give you enough motivation to take care of it.

## **The Closing Thought**

The truth is that everyone will make mistakes now and then. And even if you avoid these mistakes, you'll probably commit others.

The only way to succeed in gardening is to make mistakes and learn from them. Everything gets easier with practice and consistency, and gardening is no exception.

One last mistake NOT to make... share your knowledge and mistakes with others... it's the best way to learn and grow!