

Mistakes a West Central Missouri Gardener Doesn't Have To Make

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The number and magnitude of gardening mistakes made by a gardener will more than likely vary with their gardening objectives. Gardeners and what they grow in their gardens are as varied as the number of leaves on their plants. These gardening mistakes were compiled through hands-on experience (yep, we have made them all), interviews with gardeners, a few book reviews, and of course help from Google. Here is the list: At number 1 is putting the wrong plant in the wrong place. Plants of all kinds usually change and if successful grow up to be much larger in girth, height, and robustness. Some like sun, others shade, some like friendly loam, others like lots of water and others not much. Very few garden plants however like our Missouri clay. If there is a "1a" it is this, research and/or read about the needs, likes, dislikes, and temperament of your plant prior (yes prior) to planting. Give some real thought to plant placement. A second mistake to avoid is to not remember we live in a prairie, and Zone 6, where the summers are usually hot, dry, and accompanied by more than our fair share of wind. If your plants are planted in a location where it is not easy for them to be watered and cared for it is likely both the plant and the gardener will be hating life when July and August rolls around. Over watering however, just like under watering, is a very common mistake often made by the most experienced gardeners. While we are at it lets throw in the same about fertilizers. Don't over or under fertilize either. Plant selection is a third mistake to avoid. Not all plants are created equal and believe it or not some will not be happy in west central Missouri. Plant selection is crucial and directly related to gardener happiness too. And a gardener's positive attitude is very important. Besides, nobody likes a grouchy gardener, not even their Mother. It's hard to go wrong with plants indigenous to the area but care is needed in the selection of others. Mistake number 4 is to kill all the bugs in the garden. Some bugs may deserve it in spades but there others who, next to you of course, who are your garden's best friend. Be cautious and selective about what bug sprays you use. Mistakes here are detrimental to your garden, friendly bugs, beautiful bugs (who don't like butterflies), the environment, and your pocketbook. Mistake number 5 is one most won't admit to. The weed you just pulled was a flower and represented a combined effort of your hard work and Mother Nature's good will. Taking care of new seedbeds, and discriminating between good plants and bad plants is sometimes hard to do by the best. Not weeding too soon, or too late, is a function of the almost constant care a growing garden often requires. Sometimes gardening is a labor intensive effort, sometimes a down and dirty competition with the elements, but most often a path to greater harmony and joy.

There are other gardening issues needing out attention and will be addressed in later articles. Thank You for reading this and Happy Gardening.