

## Common Beginning Gardening Mistakes:

**Overwatering:** Most new gardeners think that the more water the better. Just the opposite is true. Take the time to learn exactly what the watering needs of your plants are. If you are watering anything daily you are probably watering too much.

**Fertilizing:** More is not always better, often, it is worse. Take the time to learn the nutrient needs of your plants and the differences in various kinds and levels of fertilizer. If you feed your tomatoes nothing but fish emulsion you will have lovely big, green plants, but no tomatoes.

**Kill All Bugs:** Those new to gardening often feel that "the only good bug is a dead bug." NOT TRUE. A healthy garden will always have a population of insect life GOOD and BAD. The key is balance. Remember, the garden isn't your house, it is theirs and most of the insects in the vegetable garden are good guys. They may nibble on the occasional leaf but they more than earn their keep by eating up the bad guys and providing pollination services. Less than 5% of the various insects, beetles, spiders, worms and caterpillars, etc., are true pests.

**Overcrowding:** Overcrowding plants doesn't do them any favors. Plants need room to breathe along with good air circulation. They also need light and planting too densely blocks their ability to reach their full potential. Overcrowding causes stress and makes them more prone to disease.

**Avoiding Weeding:** Whether by hook, crook or hand those weeds have to come out of the garden and getting them out before they go to seed can make a world of difference. You can do much to limit the problem of weeds (ground covers, mulching) but there is no free lunch. All gardens need maintenance.

**Not Preparing New Beds Properly:** Piling soil or compost on top of your garden bed WILL NOT kill weeds. They will thrive and flourish in the rich new soil. Be diligent in pulling and digging the area. The time spent building a good weed free soil base *before* planting will make the future tending of the bed much easier and more satisfying.

**Assuming all plants require the same amount of water:** You need to read about the plant that you're growing. Some plants require more water than others. You should determine this before you plant your garden so you can grow similar plants together.

## Other Helpful Gardening Tips:

**Beware Of Overly Invasive Plants:** Often plants are listed in catalogs as: "readily reseeding" or "vigorous" or "having a spreading habit" or being "extremely hardy". This often may mean the plant can become invasive and spread well beyond your intended area. Mint and horseradish are good examples.

**Frustration is normal:** Gardening is a learning process and improvements will happen with time. Keep a gardening diary and take good notes. It's amazing how quickly you will forget things over the winter unless they are written down.

## Happy Gardening!