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Mistakes When Planting or Transplanting

By James Ellison

We can plant too early. Remember those beautiful warm March or April days when we are tempted to go out and start our gardens? Why not, the stores already have the plants for us to transplant so it must be time. Early planting can lead to money out of your pocket.

Even if we plant the seeds like corn and beans too early they will go bad before they have a chance to germinate. The seedlings may be hit by a last frost or low night temperatures. Gardening takes a lot of work but also a lot of luck.

We can not hurry spring, mother nature sees to that.

Know what plants will take some cool weather and what plants won't take cool weather. Eggplants, melons and peppers need warmer temps to survive and grow. Plants like impatiens and begonias will not survive the cold.

Ideally wait till night temps are at least 50 degrees F (10 degrees C). We just can't rush spring.

We can plant too close to each other. If you are planting annuals then plant close but if you are planting permanent shrubs or trees don't plant too close. In the future years it will show in the health of the plant and the looks that they have grown too close.

Air circulation plays a vital factor in the health of a plant. If the plants are too close bad circulation will affect the plants and it will show. This will, especially, favor fungal diseases. Your plants don't deserve to get sick from our mistakes. Know your plant's height and width at maturity.

In vegetable gardening we all want the most out of our plants. You won't get that good production if you plant too close or too much. Keep the seedlings at recommended spacing and when putting transplants in keep their distance. Would you plant 1 tomato plant 1 foot from the other and expect to get a good crop that season, of course not.

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Don't buy plants and let them set a long time before putting into the ground. Again we are tempted to buy on impulse plants that we take home and let set for weeks. They get dried out, stressed out and root-bound.

The most forgotten purchase of plants is bulbs, tubers and corms. Some need to go into the ground immediately, some can wait. Best to be safe then sorry—plant them. Your bulbs will not bloom if they don't have a chance to established their root system first.

The roots have to be taken care of properly also. If we have containers with root-bound plants in them we need to be careful not to break off the roots when transplanting. When planting, take the roots and untangle and straighten them as much as possible.

Some good tips for root-bound plants are:

+Circling roots of shrubs and trees. To avoid these types try buying a smaller plant in a larger pot.

+If the roots can't be straighten then score the rootball. The ends then will grow new roots and re-establish itself.

+Most smaller plants can have their roots straighten by just brushing the roots with your hand.

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How To Use Annuals In Landscaping Your Garden

By Paul Curran

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An annual, from the point of view of the amateur gardener, is any plant which must be replaced each year and which flowers only once in its life. Annuals generally are grown from seed. The chief advantage of annuals over perennials is their low cost. Thousands of plants can be grown from a single packet of seeds.

Annuals are also very decorative, and provide the best source of flowers for cutting. Their season of bloom is relatively long, as well. Their chief disadvantage is the late date at which they bloom. If annuals are used alone in a bed or border, a good part

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of the season will pass with little to show in the way of color.

Annuals are also of use as a filler between shrubs set some distance apart. This permits the shrub to grow, yet prevents too stark an appearance. The sowing of annuals, of course, depends upon the class to which they belong. The hardier flowers, such as larkspur, poppies and cornflowers, can be profitably planted in late fall. The ground preparation must be just as careful as for spring planting.

Planting in fall is advantageous since it permits the flowers to get an early start the following spring. Certain other hardy annuals can be planted early in spring as soon as the ground is workable. It is a good idea to start some of the less hardy annuals in seed pots, or in coldframes, as early as March. Otherwise, these plants cannot be set out until all danger of frost is gone. Outdoor planting of annuals in the spring follows thorough soil preparation.

The seedbed must be carefully pulverized with a rake after it has been prepared and prior to planting. Eliminate all lumps. The seeds are sown broadcast in the patch selected, and then are lightly covered with soil. The soil may be gently tamped after the covering is completed. The patch should be identified with a stake and some sort of sign. Flower seeds are best planted near the surface.

In no case should they be sown more than 1 inch deep. The seeds of larger plants which have a strong growth, such as sunflowers, can be planted in hills spaced from 2 to 4 feet apart. Often, annuals are planted in rows. This method is used when a cutting

garden is being grown. To do this, dig a shallow trench not more than 1 inch deep with a trowel, or your fingers, and then place the seed in the trench.

Sow more seed than appears necessary, and then trim out after the plants appear above ground. Thinning is required, in any event, for a good crop of annuals, if only to insure sufficient room for each plant. Transplanting is a considerable shock in the life of a plant, and unless it is carefully done, the plant will die. It is a good idea to expose coldframes and potted seeds to the outside air for a time before transplanting, in order to prevent shock.

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All the soil in the frame or pot should be used when transplanting. Transplanting should be done on a cloudy, damp day, if possible. If the soil is dry, it should be watered before transplanting, and then thoroughly after the plants are in the ground. If the day is sunny, some sort of shade should be provided for the newly transferred plants. As soon as the plants are established, these protective coverings can be removed.

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