

# HOME, LAWN & GARDEN

Eliminate unwanted post-winter odours

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Check your home for winter damage

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It will only be a matter of weeks before area garden centres will be filled with bright and colourful flowers....and hundreds of gardeners who can't wait for the chance to get their hands in the dirt.

## Mistakes to avoid this spring

You come from a long line of green thumbs, and this year, you're planning to take your own stab at gardening. Like any first-time gardener and even some pros, you're bound to make some mistakes. Following is a description of some of the most common ones that you'll want to keep in mind and try to avoid.

### Confining plants to perimeters

The best gardens are located where soil and light conditions are ideal. For some gardeners, this site is on the edge of their landscape; for others, it is in the center. When deciding where to locate your garden, don't overlook the center of your landscape. That may just be the best spot.

### Collecting one of everything

The best gardens consist of plants that complement rather than compete with each other. The plants vary in color, texture and height, but look like they belong together. Resist the urge to go out and collect one of everything, or you'll end up with very little continuity and a hodge-podge of a garden.

### Looking at a garden from one standpoint

The best gardens look good from all angles, inside and out. When planning your garden, strive to maximize the view. Walk through your home and make sure that you can see your garden from key vantage points. If you have French doors in your living room that open out onto the backyard, for example, make certain you can see your garden from there. Don't place a tree near those doors that will block the view. Give everyone who comes into your home the opportunity to enjoy your garden, whether inside or out.

### Shearing plants with abandon

The best gardens contain well-pruned plants. If your plants experience a period of rapid growth, don't go overboard and shear them mercilessly. Not only will it take you two or three years to undo the damage, but you may have to bring in a professional. If some of your plants get too large for the space they are in, move them to a more appropriate location rather than destroying them with shearing.

### Cluttering up the garden

The best gardens are adorned with ornaments only where needed. They are not littered with statuary, garden globes and stepping-stones. The more ornaments in the garden, the less the focus on the garden. If you have several garden ornaments, consider rotating them to keep your garden uncluttered.

These are five of the most common mistakes that gardeners make. Be aware of them and do your best to avoid them.

—By Tresa Erickson



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