

Common Landscaping Mistakes

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service — Galveston County Office



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Dr. William M. Johnson is a horticulturist with the Galveston County Office of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Visit his website at <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston>.

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PHOTO CREDIT: Herman Auer

Many gardeners are considering making minor to major improvements to their landscapes as part of their gardening activities to start the New Year. The good news is that mid-winter is an ideal month to start planning for renovating the home landscape.

Many gardeners consider making minor to major improvements to their landscapes as the spring growing season approaches. The good news is that midwinter is an ideal time period to start planning for renovating the home landscape.

Here are a few common mistakes that you should avoid as you make plans to

improve your landscape over the New Year.

THE "WOS" LANDSCAPING PHILOSOPHY: Over the coming weeks, garden centers, nurseries and similar outlets will be fully stocked with a plethora of plants for home landscapes. Avoid practicing the WOS or "What's On Sale" approach to landscaping. It is quite acceptable

and appropriate to purchase high quality plants that are on sale. However, do not yield to the impulse to purchasing a plant simply because it's on sale or it's pretty and then deciding later where you might place the plant or how it might fit in the overall landscape scheme.



The focus of using well-adapted plants applies to your "foundation" landscape plants which can be expected to survive our hot and cold weather seasons. However, it is quite satisfactory to include tropical and subtropical plants such as papayas, citrus, hibiscus, etc. as part of the landscape. If cold weather zaps them, they can be replaced without replacing the entire landscape.

Oftentimes, homeowners see a beautiful plant in a magazine, seed catalog or even a retail nursery and decide that they must have that plant in their yard. If that plant is not suited to its environment, it is apt to die, look bad, or require too much care.

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The scenarios are endless; however, a little bit of planning will go a long way in preventing these disasters. Be sure to note a plant's mature height and width before you place the plant in your landscape. Plants are like puppies—they start off cute and small, but they're going to grow quickly!

Many times, a smaller tree will re-establish itself more rapidly, producing a nicer tree in a shorter time period. With the money you save buying smaller trees, you can get a good start on the rest of your landscape.

SCATTER-GUN PLANTING: Even when homeowners select plants that are suited to their environment, they often make the mistake of planting one of everything they can find at the nursery. Too much diversity in

A mass planting of one kind of plant will have more visual impact than the same space filled with a scattering of different plants. Repeat some of the same colors and plants throughout your landscape to create a unifying effect.

NOT TAKING TIME FOR COMPARISON SHOPPING: When purchasing a sizable number of plants, take time to shop and compare. While many nursery and garden supplier prices are competitive for many products, prices do vary for nursery stock and plant materials. Check several nurseries before buying, to be certain you are getting the best price for quality merchandise.

This overview is not intended to instill paranoia in making improvements in your landscape endeavors. Don't worry about making a major mistake in your landscape as most mistakes can be easily fixed. The wonderful thing about a landscape is that the decisions don't have to be permanent. Landscapes should be refreshed and updated to fix problems or to change with your taste and your gardening discoveries. Enjoy the blessings of gardening.