

# VEGETABLE GARDEN MISTAKES EVEN EXPERTS SOMETIMES MAKE

By FORT BEND COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS.

Even the most experienced gardeners sometimes make mistakes. With the fall planting season upon us, here are some considerations to keep in mind to chase potential gardener's remorse away!

## **Remember the adage “Too much of a good thing...” -**

- If tilling is part of your garden prep routine, be careful not to overdo it! Too much tilling unduly damages the natural habitat in the soil, the habitat that benefits your plants!
- High quality compost, in the right amount, is an important natural source of nutrients to support healthy plant growth. If a little is good, more is not necessarily better! Too much compost means lots of nitrogen. Your plants will have lots of lush green foliage, but may have fewer flowers and fruits!
- A good compost should have reached a high enough temperature during its processing to deactivate seeds. Know your compost! Nothing is more devastating than to see a crop of sprouting weeds – especially Sedge - in your freshly prepped garden beds!

## **Make the weather your ally**

- Keep a weather journal and know the optimal planting temperature of each plant variety. Heat and drought tolerant varieties are always a good growing choice for our area.
- Fluctuating fall temperatures can put tender new plants in jeopardy - be prepared to shade from undue heat and protect from impending cold.
- Fall transplants can benefit by being placed in the ground just before the arrival of a cool, rain-bearing weather front. Stake to protect them from wind damage.

## **Know your garden insects, both friend and foe**

- Many insects are beneficial and help keep pesky ones in check! Encourage the beneficials!
- Plants that repel pests and pollinator plants that attract beneficial insects can be helpful in controlling unwanted insect guests, as can companion planting.
- Be watchful, be prepared and be proactive if you see insect foes begin to get the upper-hand in the garden. Gardeners sometimes wait too long to take decisive action, in hopes the situation will not get worse.