

## HOME &amp; GARDEN

# Five common mistakes gardeners make

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HERMISTON HERALD

Whether growing a flower garden or vegetable garden, Master Gardener Bill Dochnahl said people can go wrong in a number of areas.

## 1. Watering

Dochnahl said one of the most common mistakes is gardeners either over-water or under-water their plants or lawn. Over-watering may wash away necessary plant nutrients. Too little water, however, will dry out the plant and kill it.

"The biggest mistake is not knowing how much to water," he said. "Most people will water too much."

## 2. Amendments

Dochnahl said another mistake he sees among other gardeners is improper use of amendments,

such as fertilizer and plant foods. Frequently, he said, people purchase fertilizer or plant food without knowing when it should be used or how.

"They need to read the labels on any of the amendments that they buy," he said, adding understanding the product they intend to use and what it does is important for plant health.

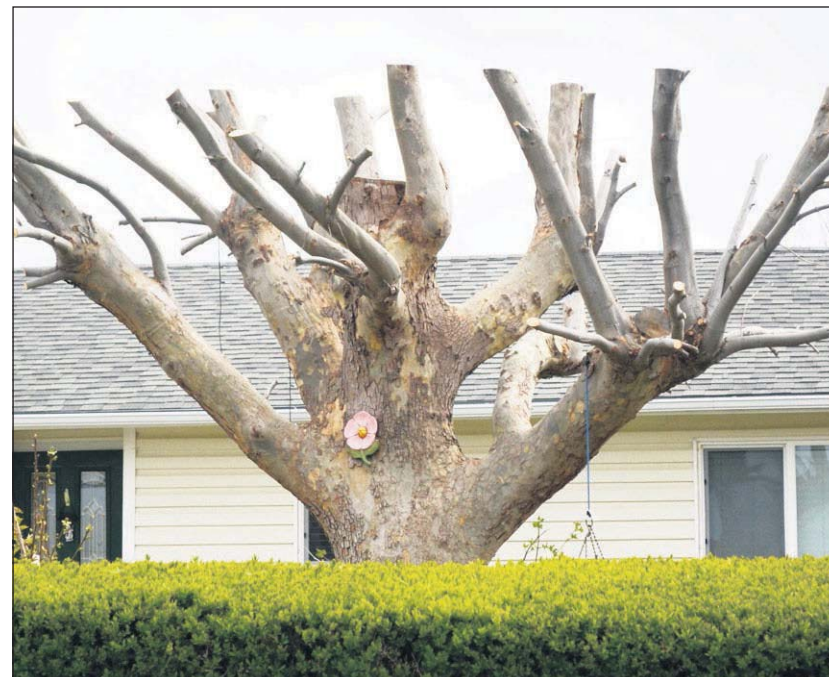
Too much fertilizer, Dochnahl said, can negatively impact plants in a number of ways, including weakening them and making them more susceptible to disease or insect attacks.

Dochnahl suggests gardeners first test their soil to see if any nutrients are lacking, so if they do decide to fertilize, they can buy a product that will address deficiencies.

## 3. Planting the right plant in the right place

The third biggest mistake, Dochnahl said, is people plant flowers or vegetables in locations not suitable for growth. If a flower, such as a hosta, which needs partial shade or full shade to thrive, is planted in a location that receives more sunlight than shade or in open sun, they'll burn. When buying a plant, people should read the label saying which conditions are necessary for growth. Partial sunlight, he said, means mostly shady.

Another problem Dochnahl said he sees is plants placed in a location not suitable for their size. People need to take into account how big something will grow before planting it next to something, such as a house, lest a tree grow into the side of a house. He said people should also refrain from planting too close to other trees or shrubs or flowers. He said plants



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Pruning trees to such an extent that the main stem and uppermost branches are cut off is known as topping. While it may make the size more desirable, topping is actually bad for the tree's health.

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