



Gardeners Are Optimists

For better or worse, another gardening season is over. This week, we could talk about reviewing your gardening year, selecting disease resistant cultivars, proper pruning, watering or mulching techniques, or keeping garden records of success or failures so next year's growing season goes better.

But sometimes, you just need a little commiseration to lighten your soul. So, if your garden post-mortem revealed the season was a disappointment, take heart – there's a whole series of natural laws explaining what happened. Check to see how many of these were true for you and for a few words of advice.

- The likelihood of rain is inversely proportional to need. (Raised beds can help wet soil dry more quickly.)
- The greater the cost of seeds or plants, the more likely they are to
 - never come up
 - be eaten by moles before they come up
 - be eaten by rabbits after they come up
 - come up and contract a fatal disease
 - get stepped on, or
 - be killed by frost.
- Seeds planted too close together will all germinate so they must be thinned, but seeds planted at the appropriate spacing for best growth will germinate poorly.
- Overplanting to compensate for anticipated losses to insects, animals or weather invariably results in a glut of produce. (However, our local food pantries will always welcome extra garden produce.)
- Weeds proliferate most vigorously when you least have time to deal with them.
- Four plantings of beans at weekly intervals will all be ready for harvesting at exactly the same time.
- The year you are ready to get your cool-weather vegetables in early will be the year of record high rain in April and May – keeping you out of the garden.
- If you make plans to plant a fall garden, September will be the hottest or wettest in history. (Transplants for fall gardens can be started indoors ahead of the planting season, just like spring transplants.)
- Your neighbor's favorite high producing variety will fail to grow for you.
- Rabbit-proof fencing isn't.
- The kink in the garden hose is always at the other end.
- The pesticide that kills your neighbor's cabbage worms only inspires yours to greater appetite.
- Early tomatoes never are. Late tomatoes always are.
- The more meticulous you are in keeping garden records, the greater the likelihood that you will lose them.

- You never find out about the easy and/or inexpensive way to do something until you've tried all the other ways.
- Lawn and garden chores multiply to more than fill the time available to do them.
- Rows laid out in straight lines develop zigzags when you're not looking.
- Early season joy at the abundance of beautiful flowers on your fruit trees, is followed in late summer at dismay as your fruit tree branches break under the heavy fruit load. (Spring thinning of new fruits in your home orchard is a very important step for developing good fruit size, quality and maintaining tree health.)

However the gardening season went for you this year, remember there's always another year to try again. Soon the garden catalogs with their beautiful pictures will start to arrive and you can begin dreaming about next year's gardens. Because gardeners are eternal optimists!

Your Suggestions are Welcome!

Is there a lawn and gardening topic you would like to learn more about? Sarah Browning is an Extension Educator with Nebraska Extension and can be contacted by phone 402 441-7180, by mail at 444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln, NE 68528: or by e-mail sarah.browning@unl.edu.

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