

Questions to Ask Before Ordering Seeds

The basket beside my chair is filling up quickly with a variety of seed catalogs, and I have yet to start my list! If I don't get my order together soon, the new varieties will already be sold out and I will be disappointed.

Armchair shoppers need to be cautious. It is always wise to have a plan and try to stick to it. It's time to get out your garden journal and think about what you want to plant and where. Remember to consider crop rotation to lessen disease and insect problems. Sharpen that pencil and pull out some graph paper and start designing your 2020 gardens!

Here are some questions to consider before purchasing seeds and plants:

1. What exactly is the plant in question? Common names may vary, so look for Latin or scientific names to be listed, in particular with ornamental plants. If not given, you may not get the plant you think you are ordering!
2. Will it grow here? Plant hardiness is a very important selection factor for trees, shrubs, and ornamental plants. Be sure you know your zone and check the information given in the catalog. Related to hardiness is the length of the growing season. Again, be sure to check the catalog for how many days to maturity for vegetables and know your average last frost date for your area.
3. What are the needs of the plant? Needs include things such as fertilizer, water, light, pruning, and space. Again, consider whether the plant is really a good fit for your yard and garden and the amount of attention you plan to give. A "needy" plant has no place in my flower beds. I become ruthless as the dry, hot days of summer come, and that flower that likes "wet" feet is definitely doomed since I hate to pull out the garden hose!
4. Last, but not least, do I really need it? (This question is the toughest for most gardeners.) Remember that the plant needs to fit the site where planted. (Right plant, Right place) If you are planting a vegetable that no one in your family enjoys eating, you are wasting valuable space in your garden!

Before you mail that seed/plant order, spread the catalogs out on the counter and compare descriptions and prices. And lastly, be sure to check what seeds you have left over from last year!

If you keep turning back to that one plant that makes your heart "flutter", go ahead.... order it! Most gardeners would probably admit that they have done exactly the same thing!

On **Thursday, January 16, 2020**, OSUE Brown County Master Gardener Volunteer, Jim Crocker, will join me for a presentation about **Raised Bed Gardening**. Jim will talk about Construction, Growing Media, Planting, and Watering. I will share a power point program of different design possibilities as well as the construction of my raised beds. Remember that all seminars are free and open to the public and are held at the **Mt. Orab Campus of Southern State Community College** in **Room 208** starting at 7:00 p.m. If SSCC is closed due to inclement weather, the seminar will be cancelled. You can sign up for alerts at www.sccc.edu/alerts or call 937-444-7722.

Get out your garden journal and some graph paper and start planning your 2020 garden!