

# 10 Greenhouse Gardening Mistakes to Avoid

Don't let simple mistakes steal the joy from your greenhouse journey. Whether you're just getting started or troubleshooting a few issues, these are the top 10 gardening blunders we see, and the good news? Every single one is fixable.



## 1. Poor Ventilation = Sick Plants

Your greenhouse may feel warm and cozy, but your plants also need fresh air to thrive. With good airflow, you can keep humidity in check, reduce the chance of mold or mildew, and make your space less appealing to pesky visitors.

### AVOID IT

Make sure your greenhouse has windows and/or doors, or fans, auto vents, exhaust fans (or ideally a combo). Open doors or vents during the day, especially when temps climb.

## 2. Too Much Heat, Not Enough Shade

Greenhouses are heat magnets, which is great — until it isn't. Too much heat can cause plants to wilt, drop leaves, or even die.

### AVOID IT

When summer temperatures rise, shade cloth can make a big difference in your greenhouse. Add a digital thermometer (especially one that tracks humidity), and you'll be able to adjust as needed to keep conditions just right for your plants.

## 3. Not Giving Plants Enough Light

Greenhouses let in light — but that doesn't always mean it's enough. Short winter days, cloudy stretches, or crowded setups can leave plants leggy, pale, and struggling to thrive.

### AVOID IT

Watch how sunlight moves through your greenhouse at different times of year. Rotate plants regularly so they all get their moment in the sun. In winter or if your greenhouse is shaded, consider adding grow lights — especially for seedlings and fruiting plants that need 12-16 hours of light. My greenhouse sits in an open area and I never utilize additional light sources.

## 4. Not Knowing What to Plant — and When

Not everything thrives in a greenhouse year-round. Some plants need cool nights to bloom, others crave the steady warmth a greenhouse offers.

### AVOID IT

Make a seasonal planting calendar for your zone. Think cool crops (lettuce, kale, peas) in early spring, heat lovers (tomatoes, peppers, zinnias) in summer, and herbs or greens in fall and winter.

## 5. Skipping the Soil Prep

Throwing potting mix into a tray and planting isn't quite enough. Greenhouse soil needs to drain well, retain moisture, and have nutrients to support rapid growth.

### AVOID IT

Use high-quality soil blends or compost-rich mixes, especially if you're using raised beds or containers. Replenish with compost or organic fertilizers regularly. I use a seed starting mix to start all of my seeds, you can purchase it already mixed up or to save money, make your own.

## 6. Overwatering — It Happens to the Best of Us

We all want to be good plant parents, but in the greenhouse, water doesn't always evaporate as quickly. That means roots can rot fast if you're watering on autopilot.

### AVOID IT

Check soil moisture before you water. Use trays for bottom watering seedlings. And if something's droopy, don't assume it's thirsty — it might be drowning.

## 7. Forgetting to Label Plants

It's all fun and games until your seed trays are full and every sprout looks identical. Was that cherry tomato or beefsteak? Zinnias or cosmos? Without labels, you're left guessing — and possibly planting things in the wrong place later on. Trust me! I'm experienced with this mistake!

### AVOID IT

Always label your seeds and transplants — even if you think you'll remember. Use waterproof markers or garden labels that won't fade or wash off. Bonus tip: include the variety and date you planted for easy tracking.

## 8. Not Having a Backup Plan for Power

If you're using heat mats, lights, or heaters, a power outage during a cold snap can be devastating.

### AVOID IT

Keep frost cloth or insulated covers on hand. If your area is prone to outages, consider a small generator or solar setup for essential equipment. Have backup propane on hand as well. I just like to be prepared but didn't have to use my backup sources once this past winter.



## 9. Crowding Plants Too Close

It's tempting to use every inch of space, but overcrowding leads to poor airflow, disease spread, and weak growth.

### AVOID IT

Follow spacing guidelines for each plant. It may feel sparse at first, but your plants will thank you when they're lush and healthy with room to grow.



## 10. Trying to Do Everything at Once

This is a big one. A greenhouse opens up so many possibilities — and it's easy to burn out trying to grow everything your heart desires in year one.

### AVOID IT

Start small and learn as you go. Focus on a few crops that you and your family love. Pay attention to what works — and what doesn't. Gardening is a journey, not a sprint.

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