Put the right plant in the right spot

Although a big part of gardening is planting the plants and keeping them watered, there are several other factors that must be considered in order to have a successful garden.

Even before gardeners go to the nursery to select plants, drop in that first seed or transplant a seedling, take a good look around the landscape. Gardening can be a lot of work, so save yourself some time and money and consider elements such as drainage, amount of sun/shade, soil type and windbreaks before you begin. It can be disappointing when plants don’t fare well.

When planning a garden space, select plants that are suited for the landscape and hardiness zone. Is the yard shady? If so, don’t pick sun-loving varieties. Even though you may love certain flowers, if they don’t grow well in Oklahoma’s scorching heat, you’ll be disappointed in the results.

While some aspects of your landscape can be altered, the easiest route is to select herbaceous plants, shrubs and trees that are suited to the existing conditions in the yard. Plants typically will thrive in an environment favorable to their growing requirements without a lot of attention. On the other hand, plants not grown in the desired conditions likely will be stressed, vulnerable to pests and diseases and probably will require additional care.

When gardeners are making selections, make sure you understand the requirements of the plants you choose and that your landscape meets those needs. Check the plant’s hardiness zone rating. Much of Oklahoma is zone 7 with the panhandle being zone 6.

Different plants have different needs, so it’s important to group plants together that have similar needs. Plants that require full sun, which is at least six hours of direct sunlight, shouldn’t be paired with plants better suited for more shade. Shade plants may require anything from indirect light to deep shade. True shade plants, such as many varieties of fern, can die because of too much sun.

It’s likely you’ll come across some plants that indicate part sun/part shade. These plants typically do well under a variety of conditions. It’s important, however, not to push their limits too far. The part shade plants may be stressed if it receives too much sun. On the flip side, the partial sun plants may fail to bloom if planted in an area that’s too shady.

Sunlight isn’t the only thing to consider. Think about the moisture requirements of all the different plants. Don’t put drought-tolerant plants together with plants that have high irrigation needs.
So, gardeners, as you place plants in your landscape, group them with similar light, soil and water needs. This will help ensure success in the garden.