

## The Joys of Gardening

If you are not a gardener, you may wonder why this hobby has become so popular even with city people who have the resources to go to the grocery and get food with much less effort. Perhaps much of the joy that comes from gardening originated in our baby boomer values that came from those golden "hippie" days of the 1960s. Part of the ethical and moral system of that time in our cultural history was the "back to the land" movement to get back to our roots and away from the alleged sins of modern society.

From this same movement we got the increased interest in vegetarianism, yoga, natural eating and the environmental movement. So, while we look back with a bit of chagrin on the idealism and sometimes radical values that this era of baby boomer history represents, there are some very good lifestyle choices that came from that era of our shared lives. And the love of gardening is one of the good things we kept from that time.

Gardening is a hobby that is unique among pastimes because virtually nothing bad can come of it. Even if you are a total failure at gardening and don't produce a single morsel of food from your garden, just the act of working with the earth and making something grow is so therapeutic that it's worth the effort even if you only grow weeds.

One reason gardening is a wonderful hobby is that it's simple. But you can get as sophisticated and scientific at it as you please. Gardening is like fishing in the way that even if you are terrible at it, it's entirely worth doing just for the joy of the time you are out there. There really is nothing comparable in therapy for going out in the garden in the evening after a stressful time at your job. Working with the soil and spending sometime nurturing and pouring your tender loving care into the garden can make those worries and anxieties of the office melt away. Then when you come in after an hour of gardening, those cares take on their proper perspective so you can deal with them.

Gardening in creativity for the uncreative. When you till your garden and prepare your soil, that is like a master painter preparing his paints to produce that masterpiece. But when you finally open the packages of seeds and have that joy of placing them just so in that carefully prepared soil, there is a sensation of making something happen that is new life and wouldn't have happened because of you that refreshes even the most cynical baby boomer and puts them in touch with themselves and with nature in a way that is hard to match in any other pastime.

Even the simple act of watering the soil has almost a mystical regenerative

power for you which is so refreshing that you will look forward to your time with your garden as much as any other part of your day. But when that day comes that you rush out to your garden after work and see those young sprouts come up that you so carefully planted and cared for, it's a little moment of parenting that can bring real joy to your heart.

We know that we did not create the seed and that we are no more than caregivers in helping that plant sprout and then grow into a healthy fruit, herb or vegetable plant. By becoming part of the cycle of nature when you care for the plants in your garden, it gives you a feeling of completion and connection to God and his creation that could not even be replicated in the best of church services. Even the most hardened atheist will feel that connection to the eternal by simply spending time with the simple plants of the earth and letting them become part of the life he lives.

So don't be afraid to put together a small plot of land and begin planning your little garden. Even if you are an apartment dweller, you can organize a garden with planter boxes and grow lights and get many of the same joys from your little garden that the master garden with acres of crops can get.

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