

Digging Deep

...continued from page D10



Ice blue clematis is a vertical climber.

Photos Cynthia Brian

“What’s that elephant-eared plant with the pink florets called again?” she asks me as we promenade around the property. “Bergenia,” I respond, delighted that I can add something to her amazing horticultural repertoire. The bergenia in my garden came from her plantings as did my bearded iris, loquats, magnolias, plums, peaches, grapes, narcissus, pelargonium, Jacobinia, acanthus, and numerous other contributions. She presents me with a few pots of my favorite spring perennial – the “Felix Crousse” peony boasting fragrant large carmine-red double flowers gracing glossy green leaves. They will look magnificent flanking my front door. I am grateful.

We sit on the patio with a glass of wine admiring her cymbidiums with their multiple spires as the finches and hummingbirds flock the feeders. The intoxicating perfume of her jasmine vines and lilac trees permeate the evening air. After plowing the fields, my brother stops by, soon joined by my sister, nieces, and nephews. It’s family time in step with nature. We are all green thumbs.

Last year on Mother’s Day I presented my mom (whom the grandkids call “Nonie”) with “her best gift ever.” It was a book of photographs that I had taken of her garden over several years in every season embellished with favorite quotes. She still carries it everywhere with her to show friends and strangers her piece of paradise.

Arriving back in my own Lamorinda heaven, the doe and her fawn greet me without moving from their comfy bedding. The baby robins are asleep in their cozy nest as their momma proudly chirps a lullaby perched on the magnolia branch.

Robert Fulghum may have learned everything in kindergarten, but since I didn’t attend kindergarten, I learned everything I needed to know about life in a real garden ... my mom’s garden. And all I had to do was utter, “Mother, may I?” Thank you, Mom!



Fragrant purple wisteria winds around the gurgling fountain.