

Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

Why We Garden! Part 1

By Cynthia Brian

"In all things of nature there is something of the marvelous." –Aristotle

In the blustery cold of post holiday days, I found myself wandering my landscape bundled against the chill in a warm down jacket, faux fur hood, and two pairs of gloves. The winds were intense. Tree limbs littered the driveway as entire branches arched toward the ground. The gale reddened my eyes, and although nothing in the garden demanded my immediate attention, I was determined to work outside.

In the midst of the storm, I asked myself, "Why do I love gardening so much?" As I raked the rubble, and pulled the errant weeds, a river of answers flooded my brain. After asking friends, family, and strangers the same question, it became obvious that although we all have our individual reasons, gardening gets into our blood and contributes to our unique personalities, passions, and preferences.

Here are reasons we choose to be gardeners:

Part 1

Memories

Since I grew up on a 360-acre farm where we grew a great variety of organic fruits, vegetables, and herbs as well as a couple of acres of flowers, my fondest memories all have something to do with being in the dirt. I'll never forget the winter when my mom caught me picking her prized camellias. As she shouted and scolded, my devoted dog jumped between us growling at her. I learned the lesson that it was not okay to pluck flowers in any garden without permission, even if the bouquet I was picking was for my mother. She learned that our dog protected the kids first, even from our parents. Raising my own children, I wanted to give them opportunities



A fern gets a shower and shake in the sink.



Bare-root roses are now available in nurseries and garden centers.

that would trigger remembrances, whether it was harvesting the first beans, or burying a beloved pet. I still think about collecting blackberries for summer breakfasts at my grandparents' horse barn, learning to drive the jalopy in the orchard, and saving hollyhock seeds at Nonie's. A lifetime of fond memories grows in the garden.

Food

Growing your own food is the healthiest way to live. There is nothing better than eating a fresh, ripe tomato right off the vine. Oranges, grapes, apples, tangerines, cherries ... everything is sweeter and tastier when you grow it yourself. We amend our soil so we know our harvests provide nutrients and health benefits from ground to table. By learning what grows well in each season, a gardener has a yearlong produce department right outside the door.

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