

Why I Garden

Contributed by terry
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For many years I did very basic garden work. Sure, I planted some daisies in the backyard. Every year we would plant a couple of tomatoes, but failed to give them consistent care and they would turn into a tangled mess of vines and fallen rotten tomatoes. I had some blackberry bushes before someone cut them down with the lawnmower. I worked full-time, I had small children, my husband cut everything down with the lawn mower, the excuses were many!

Then a couple of years ago, I was working only part-time and my children were grown. I planted a wildflower garden in the middle of the backyard. It drew butterflies and yellow finches. I enjoyed it all summer and into the fall.

The next summer, was the year I call the "big tomato scare", although it included more than just tomatoes. Botulism on tomatoes, lettuce, spinach. I was afraid to eat anything from the grocery store! So I prepared some small beds in the backyard. I had tomatoes, cucumbers, crookneck squash, green peppers and green beans. It was wonderful to pick my own food and I became completely hooked. I was making plans for the next years garden before the first one was finished. I started composting too, coffee grounds and filters, shredded paper and cardboard, leaves and grass, leftover vegetable scraps and peels. Relatives thought I had gone over the edge when I rescued their vegetable scraps from the garbage disposal and took them home for my compost pile. I became the family joke at all gatherings.

I had started my vegetable garden late that first year, so all winter I read, gardening blogs replaced my TV viewing. I worked at home making websites, so it was extremely easy to get side tracked. My web design blog reading was replaced by vegetable gardening blogs and staring out the window planning where to put new beds. I ordered seeds from an organic seed catalog online and started them indoors in January in my kitchen! By March I was planting my lettuce, spinach and peas outside and coddling warm weather seedlings in a plastic covered shelving unit. We started eating soon afterwards, so much lettuce I had to give it away to neighbors and relatives. Other things replaced them as the warmer weather came. We ate well all spring and summer. When the weather started turning, I was still picking a bowl full of tomatoes everyday and canning them. One cannerful every day. Beans and peppers were blanched and frozen. Summer squash was grated and frozen for adding to soups later. We even had a few sweet cantelopes.

I was very sad that because of the death of my website business partner, I did not have the time to plant the cooler weather lettuces and spinach I had planned on for fall. But, spring is just around the corner! Another chance! No going back now! Why work and earn money so I can buy food that is probably tainted and poisoned, when I can work in my own garden and grow it myself for pennies. Who needs money when they can garden?! My family stopped laughing at me:)