How to Grow a Gardener
Marilyn Olson, Frederick County Master Gardener

No matter where we live, we make a house a home by adding our own personal touches. One of the ways a gardener may add their personal touch is to plant a garden making the land around their private dwelling a sacred space. Gardening is a gift we give to ourselves; it’s a way to commune with nature on a deeper level.

So how do we do this? We could place a rocker on a porch to be lulled into stillness capturing a quiet mind on a beautiful sunny day. It might be a great spot to enjoy the solitude alone or chat with someone, or even talk to the plants! One could find a beautiful pot or any number of beautiful artistic pots, fill with dirt, add some annuals, native plants or herbs and voila – magic; life and growth rocking with you on the porch.

The outdoors is such a great space to paint a pallet of colors, textures and variety simply by choosing some flowers. Or maybe your heart enjoys home-grown vegetables or fruit trees. Maybe you want to attract hummingbirds and butterflies, do some internet research (http://extension.umd.edu/frederick-county/home-gardening) on what types of feeders will attract a certain kind of bird to your beautiful space. Learn something new about plants or planting, get excited about a new activity and achievement in the outdoors, welcome some wildlife or birds – the possibilities are endless.

A garden is a great spot to cultivate love, and sensitivity to life, to enjoy harvesting fruits, vegetables, flowers and shrubs from your own labor and just simply “being.” Let your gardening inspire patience in you. Be conscious when you water and feed them, it’s like nourishing yourself. In fact, make an effort to be conscious every time you’re in your garden, or anywhere for that matter.

No matter what type of gardening you consider, it is possible to do your gardening tasks with a spirit of cooperation with nature. Being outside, digging in the dirt is so grounding to one’s being. It’s concentrating your gardening efforts with the principle of roots and extension just as plants do. Notice the feeling of the earth beneath busy feet, feel the steadiness and ease of the earth to support your efforts.

It may even heal you just by being there. Maybe even thank your plants often and tell them how beautiful they are, just as we do people in our lives. Gratitude is a wonderful personal quality, embrace it in your gardening too.

Being out in nature is being in harmony and we are the only species not in harmony with ourselves – gardening can help us get back to personal harmony; it connects us with the oneness in all life.
Take some time to just “be” in your garden this coming season and not “doing” all the time. After all we are human “beings,” not human “doings.” Allow some time in your busy schedule to meander down the garden path, enjoy the solitude, the fruits of your work. Maybe even place a hammock nearby and visualize spending more time taking in the beautiful scenery, feeling its peace.

Grow yourself – take a spiritual journey through planting a garden and consciously spending time there this up-coming gardening season.

For more information about the Frederick County Master Gardener/Horticulture Program, visit www.frederick.umd.edu/mg or call Susan Trice at the University of Maryland Extension Frederick County office, 301-600-1596. Find us on Facebook at http://www.facebook.com/mastergardenersfrederickcountymaryland
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