

GARDENING TOGETHER

For many people gardening fulfills one of those basic, personal needs like getting outdoors, connecting with the ground, exercising, painting with plants, meditation, fresh air, etc. When we garden with others, we are also provided with the opportunity to learn about the other person. Gardening together, we ultimately learn about ourselves.

For some, gardening is maintenance, while for others gardening is commitment; for some it's a chore, for others it's a passion.

When we garden together, we learn that the other person does not work at the same speed that we do. Some can immediately jump on a project, give it a try, and see what happens; others need to more fully process the entire project before beginning.

When we garden together, we find that one person has that fearless ability to quickly spend lots of money on lots of plants while others need to check and re-check the budget before spending *that much*.

When we shop for plants together, some need to see the price tag before purchasing; others can stand calmly in the check-out line at the nursery self-assured that the cost of the plant "can't be that much."

When we garden together, some have that miraculous ability to buy plants without any prior idea where they will fit into the landscape. Others however, have inherited and/or cultivated tremendous will-power and must plan out and consider where any plant will go *before* purchasing them.

When buying plants together we learn that one person immediately has a vision for how all these new plants will beautify the landscape, while the other person is dreading the number of holes to dig. And yet others, a small minority, seem to entirely forget that their purchased plants need to be planted at all.

When gardening together, one person seems to have that eye for pruning while others should probably not be allowed to touch the pruners, ever.

When we garden together, we learn that one person notices colors, another person notices textures, while some are content ignoring both color and texture.

When we garden together one person may absolutely adore fall colors

while the other anticipates all the leaves to clean up. We also learn that everyone has a different definition of what it means “to clean up.”

When we garden together, one person likes to know the names of the plants; others *must* know the scientific name; and yet others want to give their plants their own names, like ‘Bob.’

When we garden together, we find that one person likes to talk more than another person, sometimes a lot more.

When we garden together, we find that some are more inclined to hire a “college kid” to do the grunt work, while some are not. Real gardeners, however, know that there’s no such thing as grunt work.

When we garden together in large groups, we quickly learn that some are “natural born leaders” while some best benefit the garden in an armchair capacity only; when gardening in groups it is easy to see that some have a need to get much dirtier than everyone else.

When we garden together with kids we get a chance to remember that work and play are supposed to be the same thing. When we garden as *kids* we have a chance to be present, connect, communicate, play and have fun. Don’t sweat it; it’s gotta be fun. Happy gardening together.

Chuck McClung