

August: An Addendum

Ahhh, August...the gardens are looking tired, as are the gardeners. Perhaps you too have found yourself in the doldrums lately. The rabbits multiplied like, well, rabbits, and ate all of the leaves off your new butterfly weed. Put a cage around it, it will be fine. You killed every one of your new Spider milkweed. Be patient, they may be back next year. You can't believe you didn't see that button weed until it was 7 ft tall. In your defense it was well camouflaged by the sunflowers. Your 8 year old neighbor complimented you sincerely on your fine stand of pigweed. Pat his cute little head and say "Thanks for noticing!" (And remember with the first killing frost the war on weeds will end in a truce.) Then to add insult to injury, Mother Nature sent record breaking heat the week of the plant sale/garden walk. Keep yourself and the plants hydrated and forget about the rest.

This is not the time to give up! You're on the last lap, the final leg; so kick it across the finish line! Though they may look a little worn out, your plants are working hard. Many are still blooming, some are setting seed, and all are extending their roots in preparation for next year. One way I have found to get out of the doldrums is to plant more plants! In my opinion this is the best time to do so. The air is cooling, (soon, I promise) but the earth is still warm. The plants have plenty of time to settle in before winter. They'll get a head start and will be ready to burst into action next year.

Another way to escape the doldrums is to take more "beauty breaks". Snap an early morning picture of a still slumbering bumble bee. (Share it with your friends.) And remember had you not planted that flower, she wouldn't have had such a lovely bed. Relax a bit while you watch Little Bluestem swaying in one of the last summer breezes. Marvel at the fragility of the Monarchs on their 10,000 mile journey. Feel gratitude and a bit of pride that they found safety and sustenance in your garden. These moments and so many more are your reward for a job well done. But they are fleeting. In a few short weeks they'll disappear until next year.

So pat yourself on the back! Your garden isn't perfect, but the bees and butterflies don't seem to mind. I like to think that when I leave the garden at day's end, I can hear it singing Tim McGraw's lyrics; "I ain't as good as I'm gonna get, but I'm better than I used to be!"

Now go buy LOTS of plants! Tuck them into the ground and take plenty of beauty breaks!

"If you've never experienced the joy of accomplishing more than you can imagine, plant a garden." Robert Brault