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VOLUME II: THE GARDEN

Why Don't You...The Gardening Issue



Oh April! I can't believe it's finally spring, and with warm weather and sunshine to boot! This is my usual time to start obsessing about the weather and the condition of my yard, so I am thrilled to have an excuse to write about gardening. There is nothing more exciting after a long winter than green grass, budding trees and any glimpses of life. So why don't you...get outside and start gardening!



Why Don't You...Get Creative!



If you don't already have a garden, you need to find a nice spot with some sun. And with all of our beautiful trees, that can sometimes be a challenge. So get creative and don't rule out anything at first.

A friend has a pretty small lot to work with, but found a perfect 12" strip of land between her driveway and a neighbor's fence that works great for tomatoes, peppers, lettuces, beans, eggplant, and herbs.

Or, you can emulate those famous English gardeners by making the most of limited garden space and start growing flowers, vegetables and herbs in containers and bags placed on steps, patios and landings.



Grow Bags are quite effective at growing many different crops and start at \$10.95 at gardeners.com



Why Don't You...Get Some Curb Appeal



Most of us don't think about curb appeal except in terms of when we sell our home. But what is nicer than arriving home to a clean walk and some beautiful pots by your door? Isn't that a real treat? If you live in an apartment or condominium, you will find a similar way to beautify your entryway and enjoy annuals whenever you have some sunlight streaming in your home or deck. Of course, if you are selling your home, you will be attracting buyers with your pretty façade.

Look for examples of container gardens in magazines if you need ideas, or call Bridget Schroeder of the Contained Garden to whip up something wonderful within your budget (847-323-0137).

Why Don't You...Start a Garden Journal

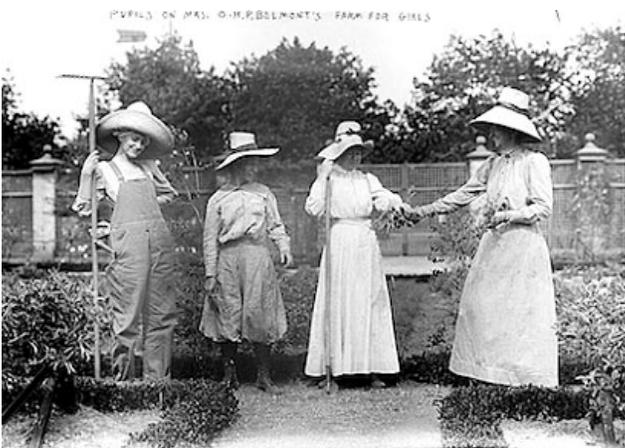


Take some notes on what you planted, how it worked, and illustrate it with some great photographs. It will be a treat to have pictures of your beautiful garden and be able to watch it evolve over years to come.

I will have more tips on gardening coming soon on my website! I'll keep you posted.



Why Don't You...Accessorize



With a great gardening hat and a one-of-a-kind picnic table.



This has to be the most gorgeous picnic table I've ever seen. Made of galvanized metal, stainless steel and jatoba

wood, you can adjust the height of each of the seats for adults or kids, or extend them all the way up to expand the size of the table to seat 12 people. Blonde children and blue housedress not included. You will find it prohibitively expensive at unicahome.com.



Why Don't You...Ask for Help

My friend Jeanne Nolan Pinsof has done more to bring vegetable gardening into vogue than anyone else on the north shore. Her business, The Organic Gardener, has helped hundreds of families grow vegetables in their backyards.



Here are Jeanne's top tips for starting a vegetable garden of your own:

Prep Your Soil... Aerate your soil and add high quality organic compost, soil conditioners, and organic fertilizers to give your plants the best possible start.

Mix it Up... Don't put all your eggs in one basket. The smartest gardeners use a combination of seeds, transplants, and plants purchased from local suppliers (Evanston's Farmer's Market and the Green City Market are great sources).

Start Early... Commonly we are told to wait until mid-May to plant, however, the early bird will have some lovely peas, lettuce and spinach if she starts planting in April.

Involve the Kids... If you have access to them, children can be a tremendous asset to your garden. They provide free labor and you can be assured you are providing a wholesome family activity. Look at how happy these kids are to work:

Learn more about Jeanne and check out her work at theorganicgardener.net



Why Don't You...Consider

Here are some properties I've recently seen that have REALLY GREAT GARDENS!



1916 West Lee Street in Evanston. A lovely three season garden room with a brick floor overlooks an organic perennial wildflower garden on an oversized lot. This charming Georgian features 4 bedrooms, 2 1/2 bathrooms and is offered at \$380,000.



693 Sheridan Road in Wilmette. Beautiful southern and eastern exposures and a screened porch overlooking the Evanston golf course will allow you to carry out all of your Martha Stewart fantasies (well, maybe not all of them.). Offered at \$1,299,000 for 4 bedrooms and 3.1 baths.



2848 Sheridan Place in Evanston. A truly beautiful property situated on a double corner lot. Already featuring a gazebo, lily pond, and screened porch, imagine the possibilities! This classic colonial was recently reduced to \$2,550,000 and features 4 bedrooms and 3.2 baths plus a coach house apartment.

Why Don't You...Plan an Outing

Here are a few of my favorite gardening events coming up this year:

- Chicago Botanic Garden Antiques and Garden Fair** April 16th through 18th
- A Bloomin' Festival** (and Plant Sale) at the Chicago Botanic Garden May 14th thru 16th
- Keep Evanston Beautiful Garden Walk** Sunday July 11th
- Sheffield Garden Walk** July 17th and 18th (Sheffield and Webster)

Please e-mail me with your favorite garden event, and I'll post them all on my website (when I can get to that...hopefully later in April.)

Why Don't I...Sign off?

Thank you for reading my garden issue! I hope I have inspired you to start thinking about gardening this spring, or at least to sit outdoors and have a gin and tonic in someone else's garden.

I would love to hear your "why don't you's" for gardening if you have some favorites you'd like to share. I am also always happy to help with any of your real estate needs or questions, and I promise not to pester you if you do call or write!

Until next time,
Sally



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