

Gardening Memories: Mother planted a garden to last a lifetime;
By Dana Brown

Mother's call would wake us in the early morning hours: "Children, come on now. We must beat the heat." Mother had our attention. We didn't dare roll over to take in another wink of sleep. All of us children could be found weeding between dew-laden strawberry plants and masses of pig and chickweeds (popular farm weeds). Oh, the drudgery! We'd weed a garden big enough to feed eight hungry mouths.

Our thoughts stirred like cold tar in the wee hours. We worked silently, too sleepy to chat, but our minds were awake enough to daydream of the day when we'd be on our own, free. Free to buy our veggies from the store like other families. Free to never wrap our hands around the neck of another weed. Free to sleep in. But instead, we picked slugs. Looking back at it all, I didn't appreciate my mother's hugh, labor-intensive, slave-inducing garden.

Then, there was Mother. She worked in the garden. It was obvious she enjoyed the sunrise over the mountains and the gentle breeze. Her song could harmonize with the clicking rain-bird sprinkler whistling over the potatoes. "Hurry now! Just two rows apiece until you're done." she said to us between songs.

As the morning went on, the sun warmed the dew and the chatter amongst us sweetened a once-cold morning. We'd stand up with soiled wet knees, to glance back at the morning's progress, to see a line of cabbages released from the grips of choking weeds and onions marching in straight neat rows. Mother seemed pleased. It was a good day.

Many years later, we are 'free'. Free to buy store bought carrots, lettuce, beans and tasteless strawberries. But we don't, thank heaven. My sisters and I all have families of our own with many souls to feed. You see, Mother planted more than veggies, berries and potatoes in her garden. She planted a discipline and appreciation for the work of our hands in the garden, and in the harvest. As the garden season commences again, our homes will be awakened by the tune of, "Children, come on now. We must beat that heat".

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