

5 Things I Learned About Gardening in 2022



I am happy to be back here on this blog with all of you who are interested in frugal gardening. I had taken a break due to health issues and a loss in the family throughout much of 2022. Luckily, a colleague was able to step in. It looks like they provided you with a lot of wonderful tips and information while I was gone. Now that I am back, I have been doing a lot of thinking about what I would most like to share with you in the months to come. In order to get into that, I think the best thing to do is to look back at 2022 and see what I learned. Here are the top five things I learned about gardening in 2022.

1. Plants Are Very Personal Gifts

I suppose that this is something that I already knew. However, I had many opportunities to think about just how personal plants are throughout 2022. As aforementioned, it was a year filled with illness and loss. As a result, many people wanted to reach out with their condolences. I received many wonderful handwritten cards. Moreover, I received practical help and emotional support. I didn't receive a lot of gifts, and I didn't receive any plants. And I am happy it was that way. Looking back now, though, I am a little surprised by this.

In my mind, it's so common for people to show up with flowers when they want to express sympathy. Or when visiting your home. And yet, I realized, people actually don't ever bring me flowers. This got me thinking – is that an old-fashioned idea? Do my people just not think of that as a gift because it's not their love language or do they know it's not mine? Mine is words and I receive cards, so that could be.

Recently, I read a memoir called “Where You End and I Begin.” The mother in the memoir has a lot of rules that people in her life find unconventional. One of them is that you don't bring cut flowers to someone's home because it creates work for the hostess. However, she liked to receive potted plants. To me, that requires a lot more ongoing work! And yet, I can see the point. So, what I learned – or what I have been musing on recently – is how personal the giving and receiving of plants is.

2. Plants That Are Best For Sympathy and Grief

Since I was on this topic, I started wondering what plants people do choose to give if they offer them to someone who is grieving. I learned that there are many different [sympathy](#)

[plants](#) each with its own meaning. For example, gladioli represent strength. Hyacinths represent sorrow.

Since plants are indeed so personal, I don't know whether or not you want to gift one to someone who is grieving. For me, though, what I found was that perhaps I could do some intentional plant shopping in order to find plants that represent the specific stage of grief that I'm in. I learned that palms represent protection, which is something that sounds nice to have during a challenging time. The plant I selected most recently, however, is a very small orchid.

I have never kept orchids because they are known to be such finicky plants. However, I was very drawn to one, so I decided to get it for myself. And only afterward did I do some research and discover that orchids have many different meanings but one is eternal love for someone who has passed away. That feels so meaningful for me right now.

3. Best Crystals for the Garden

Although I find crystals to be pretty, I have never been particularly "into" crystals. In other words, I don't carry them around or add them to an altar in order to manifest the energy that I need in my life. And yet, recently, I also find myself drawn to them. Do they have inherent natural energy? Maybe, maybe not. It sure can't hurt to learn more about them and choose ones that could offer what I'm seeking, could it?

In that vein, I started learning about [crystals that are popular for gardens](#). I will write about this in more detail in the future. The gist is that each one has a certain meaning and is good for certain types of energy. Some that are great for gardens include clear quartz and chrysocolla to promote growth, amazonite to protect against toxins in the soil and air, and black tourmaline as a protective border around a garden. It's an intriguing new approach to adding different colors, textures, and energies to a garden space that I am

excited to learn just a little bit more about.

4. Best Plants for Natural Plant Dyeing

I shared some of this with you in my early explorations. I have continued to explore this facet of gardening. In other words, I am very interested in growing plants for the purpose of dyeing fabric and, more specifically, organic cotton yarn. Additionally, I am interested in foraging for natural plants that are good for dyeing. To be honest, this is something that I've pursued wholeheartedly. However, thinking about doing so has been a beautiful way to enhance my daily life. And I hope to actively engage with this more in this fresh new year.

5. Plant and Gardening Podcasts

There is no substitute for first-hand experience. However, when I wasn't home to take care of plants, or there wasn't a garden nearby for me to enjoy, I found that books, documentaries, and podcasts made great additions to my life. Did you know there are lots of good podcasts about plants and gardening? I'll do a full post on this soon. To get you started, though, you might want to check out "The Simple Garden Life," "Garden Culture," and "Roots and Refuge." If you have any other recommendations, I'd love to know what they are!

You Might Also Like:

- [Being a Beginner in the Garden](#)
- [5 Ways Depression Costs Me In the Garden](#)
- [6 Tips to Revive Wilted Plants in the Garden](#)

5 Ways Depression Costs Me In the Garden



I struggle with chronic, recurring depression. While it's well-managed, the symptoms do creep up from time to time. [Depression is an expensive mental health condition](#), in ways that might surprise you. In fact, during bouts of depression, I find that it costs me in the garden. This does mitigate the many [mental health benefits of gardening](#). However, it's an important thing to know about if you're a frugal gardener who lives with a similar mental health challenge.

5 Ways Depression Costs Me In The

Garden

Here are the five most common ways that depression costs me in the garden.

1. Lack of Energy Means Slack in the Garden

A garden requires tending. Most plants need attention weekly if not daily. When this is part of a normal routine, it's great. In fact, it's a healthy part of the day. However, sometimes, depression wins. When it does, fatigue sets in. It literally feels impossible to get up out of the bed to do anything at all. If that happens, then gardening doesn't. And this can mean the plants wither and die.

2. What's The Point Anyway?

That refrain runs through my head when I'm dealing with a bout of depression. Depression is characterized by hopelessness and pointlessness and a lack of interest in doing things normally enjoyed. It's really hard to stay motivated to work in the garden when you can't see the point of doing it. Again, this means that the garden withers and dies.

If we can overcome these feelings (through medication, therapy, self-care, and other means,) then the growth and beauty of the garden can remind us of the point. But, sometimes, depression takes over.

3. Low Self-Esteem or Black/White Thinking

For me, depression is accompanied by a feeling of worthlessness. Some people experience black and white thinking because of their mental health conditions. In either case, this can lead to feeling like you aren't good enough to make a

garden grow. A plant starts to die, I feel like “I don’t know how to garden,” and I just give up.

Someone who loves gardening might see a small mistake in the garden and suddenly hate gardening. We lose the joy as we lose ourselves in depression. So, we abandon the garden. Or we get in there and rip it up entirely, destroying what we spent time and money creating.

4. Reckless Shopping

Although this is more commonly a characteristic of mania in bipolar depression, people, like myself, with unipolar depression, can fall into wasteful shopping as well. For me, it’s usually online shopping. I’m imagining some other life I want to have where I’m not depressed, and I’m allowing the easy mindlessness of the scroll to convince me that I just need this gadget or that to feel better. So, suddenly, I find myself buying new garden tools, plants, or a gardening apron that I can’t afford and won’t ever use.

5. Injuries

Ideally, I work through the challenges and overcome them and get back to doing things that I love. However, sometimes, when you push through before you’re ready, you end up injuring yourself. If you’re in the brain fog of depression while working with gardening tools, then you might injure yourself. This can cost me in medical care as well as lost work.

Tips for Coping

There are many amazing benefits of gardening. It’s just sometimes hard to remember them in the throes of depression. It’s helpful for me to keep lists of things I love, what the benefits are, little stories or photos that remind me of the good parts, etc. Then I look at those in depression to try to help myself overcome the inertia and get back to myself.

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- [7 Reasons Why You Should Try Gardening](#)
- [If You're Over 50, Here's Why You Should Start Gardening](#)
- [7 Financial Benefits of Backyard Gardening](#)