

Gardening: More than a Solo Activity



The pandemic continues to affect everyday life despite lockdown protocols being lifted, and I've spent a lot more time in the garden because it's currently one of the few

things I can control (albeit barely!). For more than a decade, I've continued to make mistakes and discover tiny miracles in my outdoor oasis. It's almost always been a solo activity for me. I am physically alone when I garden, but that's hardly a good description of what gardening is to me. It's much more than a thing I do by myself. On quiet mornings when the only friends I have around are the birds and rabbits, I am thinking about all the gardeners I've encountered and conversed with.

I think about the gardener who just came up with an ingenious idea to block squirrels from digging up his beds. I think about the gardener who just had her first child—a child who will no doubt dig in the dirt at some point. I think about the friend who is moving soon to a new home with a small outdoor garden space, and I'm so thrilled to see it bloom. I think about the people who aren't even gardeners yet but who may well one day become part of the green-thumbed community. I think about the people who grow and supply most of the food I eat, the local farmers, the migrant workers—and everyone else who works to bring food to people's plates. I think of the people who don't even call themselves gardeners but who have more knowledge than I'll ever glean from my pitiful forays into the world of dirt and greenery. They are all with me when I'm plucking suckers from tomatoes and grumbling about flea beetles on my radishes.

This morning as I watered my garden, I thought about the recent protests happening across America (and even a few in Canada—Toronto, Montreal). As a white person, I cannot fathom the lived experience of a black person, but I can be an ally. So today, instead of writing about something gardening related, I'd like to amplify the voices of black gardeners and point you in the direction of people to follow, learn from, and get to know. People I'll think about, too, when I'm alone in the garden, but not really alone at all. People we should listen to, hear out, and hold up not just now when they are screaming in agony for someone to listen, for something to

change but always.

It's not enough to be against racism. We must be actively anti-racist.

#blacklivesmatter

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