

Sometimes It's Nice to Visit Someone Else's Garden



This past week, my partner and I stayed at an Airbnb with a beautiful backyard garden. We chose it because it was dog friendly and our dogs were the entire reason that we were going there. But, of course, the garden itself was a nice added bonus. And I realized while I was there that sometimes it's really nice to enjoy someone else's garden rather than sitting in your own.

Why We Took Our Airbnb Garden Trip

My pup just had CCL surgery, which means that she is on sedatives and not supposed to walk around. Her full recovery time is about ten weeks. However, those first days are, of course the toughest ones. We live in an apartment up two

flights of stairs, and neither one of us wanted to deal with the headache and hassle of taking her up those stairs immediately after surgery. Instead, we wanted a place to stay where she could easily walk out the door into a yard and do her business and go right back in, no stairs necessary. That's why we got an Airbnb for a few days.

We chose the Airbnb because it was a home that didn't just say "dogs allowed" but actually really welcomed dogs. There's a difference. Especially when you have two dogs and the smaller one is 80 pounds. The one who had surgery is 108 pounds. If you were wondering why we weren't ready to carry her upstairs, that probably explains it. We communicated with the homeowners in advance and throughout the stay. They were generous with their space and great about our dogs. It was a wonderful experience.

We stayed in a small studio guesthouse without a real kitchen which ended up just perfect because there wasn't a lot of space for the dog to try to move around while she was supposed to be resting. There was a regular door as well as a double sliding door. That was perfect. With the cone of shame on her head, she could still walk easily through the door, off onto the porch, get some fresh air and do her business.



Dogs in the garden, photo by Kathryn Vercillo

The Garden at the Airbnb

What was perfect about this garden was that it was lush and beautiful ... but it wasn't perfectly manicured. In other words, if my dogs trampled it a little bit, which my dogs do, nobody was going to complain. That's exactly the kind of garden that we needed.

The backyard consisted of a ground level and then a small set of stairs up to a slight upper level. On the upper level sat a wooden swing. The garden included plants throughout both levels. From the upper level, a perimeter of plants extended around much of the yard against the fence.

There were a variety of different plants and trees in this garden. I honestly didn't look closely enough at most of them to identify them. I was in a state of wanting to just receive the overall impress and indulge in that beauty and sensation. In other words, I didn't want to think about it too much. And it was a beautiful, peaceful garden, so I didn't need to.

There were also a lot of extra decor items in the garden. Wind chimes hung in trees and off of the patio. I adore wind chimes so that was particularly delightful. Statues, fountains, trellis, potted plants, and other decor added to the space. It was all perfect.

The Pleasures of Another Person's Garden

What was particularly great about enjoying this garden is it's the kind of space that I like but I probably wouldn't create myself. We all have different styles and sometimes we just don't think about doing things the way that someone else might

do them. When we spend time in those other spaces, we get inspiration. Sometimes we use that inspiration to make changes in our own space. Sometimes we just delight in the differences while we're in the other space. Either way, it's a beautiful experience.

Indulging, Enjoying, Without Working

The best part of enjoying someone else's garden for just a short period of time is that there's no work to be done there. Yes, working in the garden can be meditative and enjoyable. But sometimes you just want to rest and indulge in what the garden has to offer without having to do any work. At least, I do. Do you?

If I'm in my own space, I always see the flaws, the imperfections, the little things that still need to be taken care of. Even if I'm just relaxing in the space and overall not feeling the need to "work" in it, it's still a little nagging thing in the back of my mind. This could be watered, that could be swept up, this needs to be planted ... It's hard to look at your own space without thinking of what there is to be done. At least, it is hard for me. Is it hard for you?

However, I don't have any of those judgments in another person's space. I simply enjoy what is there to be enjoyed. I'm more in the moment. The birds were chirping, the squirrels were scurrying, the leaves were fluttering ... and I didn't feel any particular need to do anything, fix anything, water anything, trim anything. I could simply mindfully take in all of the details of the space without any obligation or desire to do anything more than exactly that.

Other Pleasures of Another's Garden

Some of the other things that are great about spending time enjoying someone's garden other than your own might include:

- Bonding with the person whose garden it is, celebrating their space with them
- Enjoying seeing and even learning about plants that differ from those in your own space, especially if you've traveled far from home to someone else's garden
- Likewise, enjoying plants that you would never plant yourself – flowers if you're a vegetable gardener, for example, or vice versa
- And finally, returning home to your own garden with a completely different perspective and appreciation for it

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