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!

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