

My 2008 Flowery Resolutions

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Resolution No. 1-Stop Giving.

Yeah, you read that right. Haven't we given enough? One of the eco-police at the PTA suggested offering "time" for the holidays, instead of buying gifts that no one really likes and eventually end up in our overfilled landfills. I rolled my eyes at her idea and then went home and made it my own. I offered my time to help my best friend, Elissa, with her so-called *simple* garden project of adding almost a cubic yard of fresh compost to her garden.

Well, I had forgotten there wasn't a simple way to access her backyard from her city street, so we had to ferry our wheelbarrow loads through her husband's art studio. This was like turning the bulls (or Lucy and Ethel) loose in a china shop as the studio was cramped full of antique, elegant and expensive refinished lamps, chandeliers and sconces. Upon gracelessly reaching the backyard and catching our breath, we then had to lift the wheelbarrow over a cement step, shovel the compost into 1 gallon buckets and then methodically haul the buckets over a 3 foot wall and into the garden. After an hour of this misery and misfortune, I stopped and wrote,

"Dear Diary,

I hate gardening, best friends and the PTA lady who made me feel guilty about shopping at Marshalls. Do gooders should stay home." However, once all of Elissa's plants were tucked into their fertile surroundings, she looked so grateful and hopeful and I felt the warming reassurance of altruism, instead of my usual sting of cynicism.

As I drove home through San Francisco's Park Presidio, I spotted a diminutive, seasoned Asian lady trying to push her car out of a ditch. I stopped to help. The woman spoke broken English as we wrestled with her car but it wouldn't budge. I whisked out my cell phone and called my pals a block away at Lucas Film (yes, I'm namedropping). In five minutes I was surrounded by a San Francisco fire truck and a pack of cute firemen. They pampered us, first making sure we weren't hurt, and then questioned me about the car and the Asian lady. I purposefully responded with slow, deliberate answers trying to extend this divine moment of great civil responsibility, decency and absolute attention on ME to last as long as humanly possible.

I hugged the Asian lady goodbye and anointed her a saint.
Maybe what goes around *does* come back around . . .
Okay, “giving” is back in for 2008.



No. 2-More Egg Nog, Less water.

Yippee! This is going to be the best garden year ever because we just fired our lawn! No more co-dependency. Another round of organic, locally produced egg nog for all! We're excavating our front lawn and replacing it with native and drought tolerant plants. I'm done hearing, "I'm hot. I'm thirsty, I've got thatch and I'm rusty. HELP! I want my mommy!" No whiners aloud. We're bringing in plants that are self-sufficient and have high self-esteem. My new favorite undemanding obsession is *Romneya coulteri*, also called Matilija poppy. The nurseryman at Annie Annuals Nursery called it a "rampant opportunist". At first I thought he was talking about me (was he a casualty from my dating years?) until I realized he was talking about the Matija poppy. I immediately felt a bonding with this "I'm on a mission" plant. It grows over 6 feet tall and blooms all summer long with bubbly blossoms resembling fried eggs!

No. 3-Worship the Worm

It's said that in the late 1800's, British scientist Charles Darwin spent nearly 40 years studying earthworms. You wonder where he found time to develop his theories on evolution? Earthworms are the workhorses of the garden who do the dirty work to keep our soil nutritious. Debbie Tidd, from "The Gardens at Heather Farm" teaches an awesome worm composting class here in Marin County. She got me hooked on the worm and now this native New Yorker can pick them up and hold them without squealing. This year I plan to upgrade from a small plastic starter box to the "can-o-worm", the Cadillac of commercial worm bins. Besides liking the name it will allow me to collect larger batches of worm castings.

Alas, Charles Darwin, we hardly knew you.

Sometimes, late at night when I can't sleep,

I'll write your name on the deck with baby earthworms.

Is that so wrong?..

No. 4-Become a beneficial bug:

I am going to become a beneficial bug. No, not a dreadful, 16-legged creepy-crawler. Rather, I will incessantly *bug* you and your friends, in a sometimes dramatic and overbearing way, to become organic gardeners. I'm going to cajole and badger you all to work WITH nature, not against it.

This will be fun, I swear!

Here's why I'm so adamant: On my way to work there was a young man spraying a chemical fertilizer on a tiny green lawn, while his buddy worked a noisy leaf blower scattering nutrient rich leaves out into the street where they either ended up in our overtaxed landfills or clogged up the street's storm drains.

Did you know that running a leaf blower for a half hour generates as much pollution as driving a car 100 miles? And that those same leaves can be used as a mulch for your flower border?

A recent study conducted by The National Audubon Society found that homeowners are using 50% more herbicides than they did 20 years ago. Many pesticides and herbicides contain ingredients that have been listed as carcinogens. They eventually end up in our air, soil and waterways.

See, isn't this fun?

You too can make a New Years resolution to change your slipshod garden habits before we all end up in the wacky shack! Call 1-800-Cleanup for where to dispose of harmful garden products. To find less toxic alternatives, visit www.ourwaterourworld.org.



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