

Garden

Resist the need for a
perfect garden

BY ERIN LAFAIVE



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To me it was my garden. To others, perhaps an overgrown patch of plants. "Oh well," I thought, "I enjoy it."

I was especially grateful this day, looking out the window with my wet hands in dishwater, many demands were happening at once, supper cooking on the stove, kids fighting over the tv, and cats constantly meowing for food.

Enjoyment still exuded from the garden to my house – new colorful flowers; monarch butterflies flitting about; squirrels scampering through the fence; and plants swaying in the breeze.

There are other things to enjoy besides a tidy, ship-shape patch of photosynthesizing material, from the anticipation of soon to open butterfly chrysalis, to the reassuring hum of pollinating bumblebees enjoying anise hyssop blossoms, to the soft glow of light pink peonies, sweet smelling milkweed blossoms, and tart tasting sorrel leaves.

My definition of a successful garden changed. It can be many aspects such as pounds of produce collected, number of plant species, number of herbal remedy possibilities, and more qualitative measurements – joy, laughter, peace, relaxation, and wonder.



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I learned this lesson from the garden, when I wasn't even in the garden – wooden walls couldn't keep the magic of growing things away.

Now, I remind myself to look for the open spaces in the garden, those are proof I care and tend to my plants. Those gaps may be smaller than I want, but the distinct shapes of plant bundles are still there.

I take the lessons I learn from plants and reflect them into my life. Where else can I look for the "open spaces" in a "messy" house, a "busy" schedule, anywhere else in life that feels crowded with stuff, guilt, and mistakes? Those patches of "messy" and "busy" might be smaller than I think especially if I compare those to the patches of success.