

# A Beautiful Life

Magazine

Special Edition

*Homestead*

Vol. 1

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# MY GARDEN

BY RONNIE SWAIS

When I was younger I never had much luck with plants - so I never had many....or any. Something changed a few years back - for some unknown reason, at least on a conscious level, I developed an attraction, which has now blown up into a full fledged love affair with my garden.

I wrote in our regular issues of A Beautiful Life Magazine about a little fig tree I saved. When I found it in my Dad's garage, it was so pitiful looking but something told me to take it inside and take care of it. At first she was completely devoid of any leaves but soon I saw a little bud and that gave me hope. More buds followed and then low and behold I saw a little fig growing.

I have had a very difficult last decade, many heartbreaks and major life changes, but by putting focus on that little fig tree and a few other lovelies that I found - it took the focus off my troubles for a while.

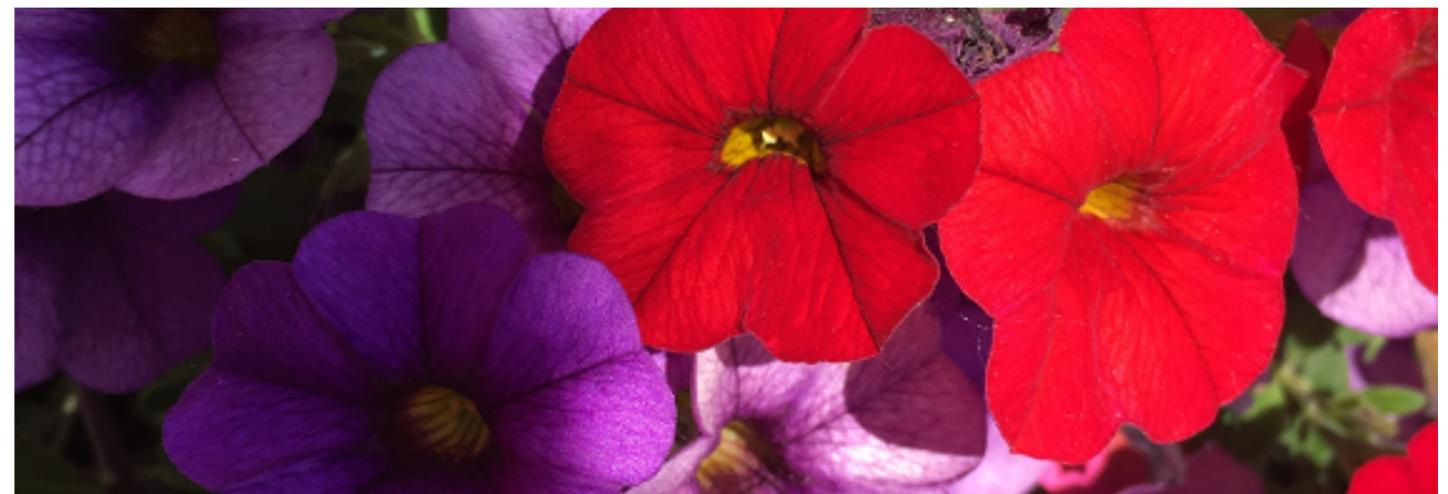
I named my little fig tree 'Faith' - because of what she ( yes she) inspired in me and I have not looked back since.

My Garden gives me a peace I thought I would never find....digging in the soil, creating new flower beds, even waiting an hour in line at Lowe's to purchase new rose bushes makes my day.

I am learning about flowers, natural pesticides, bugs, compost, seeds and soil composition. AND I LOVE IT! This year I planted cucumbers, peppers, onions,

lettuce, tomatoes, basil, chives and eggplants, strawberries, raspberries and blackberries - This is the first vegetable / fruit garden I have ever attempted and in the next Homestead Issue I'll let you know how it all turns out.

Finding peace has been a phrase I have said often in the last year - I believe that I was drawn to that little fig tree by something bigger than myself and I will be forever grateful.





# GET DIRTY

Krista Hannesen  
Editor in Chief  
A Beautiful Life Magazine



In today's society, for the most part we are afraid of germs. We tell our kids to "get outta the mud", and we do everything we can to avoid putting our bare feet on the grass.

Well, as it turns out, being out in the dirt is not only healthy, but important to stay happy.

Stress, bad sleep, and lack of essential vitamins can all cause a lack of serotonin in the body. When your body lacks serotonin, you can become anxious and depressed.

Bacteria in dirt promotes the production of serotonin, which can boost your mood!

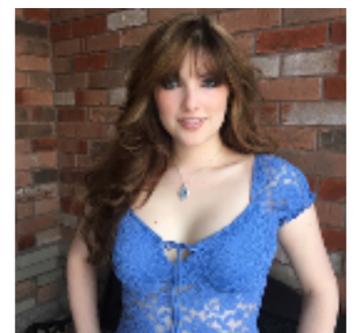
Sticking your hands in dirt is calming, and keeps your mind focused on working the land instead of dwelling in dark thoughts.

It also feels really good to accomplish something that will help you and your family, whether it's planting a pretty flower or vegetable you can eat.

Summer's here, but it's not too late to get dirty and gain the benefits of digging around in some dirt!

Here are some vegetables you can plant this summer:

- Radishes
- Carrots
- Peas
- Spinach
- Lettuce
- Cauliflower
- Broccoli
- Herbs
- Melon
- Corn
- Eggplant





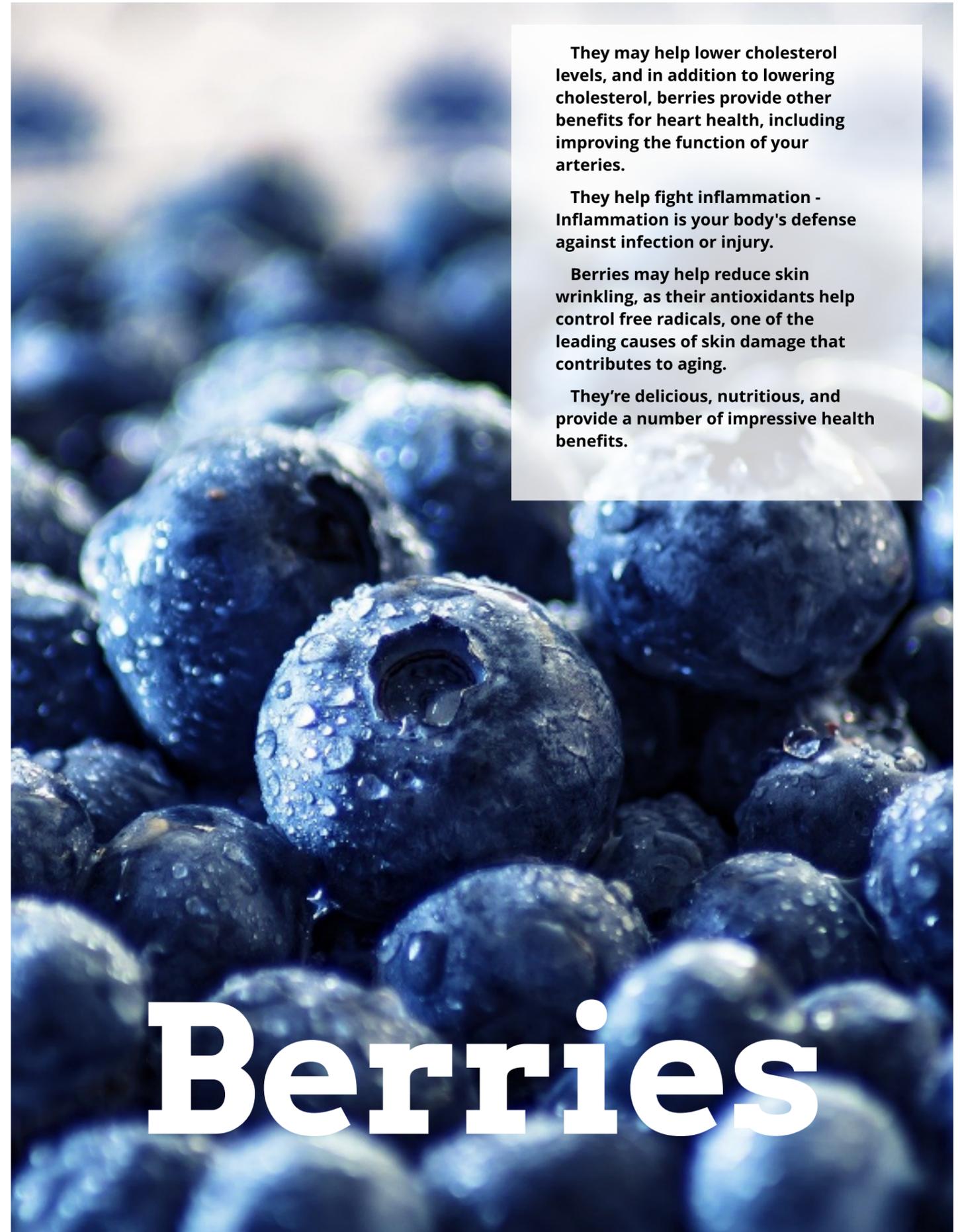
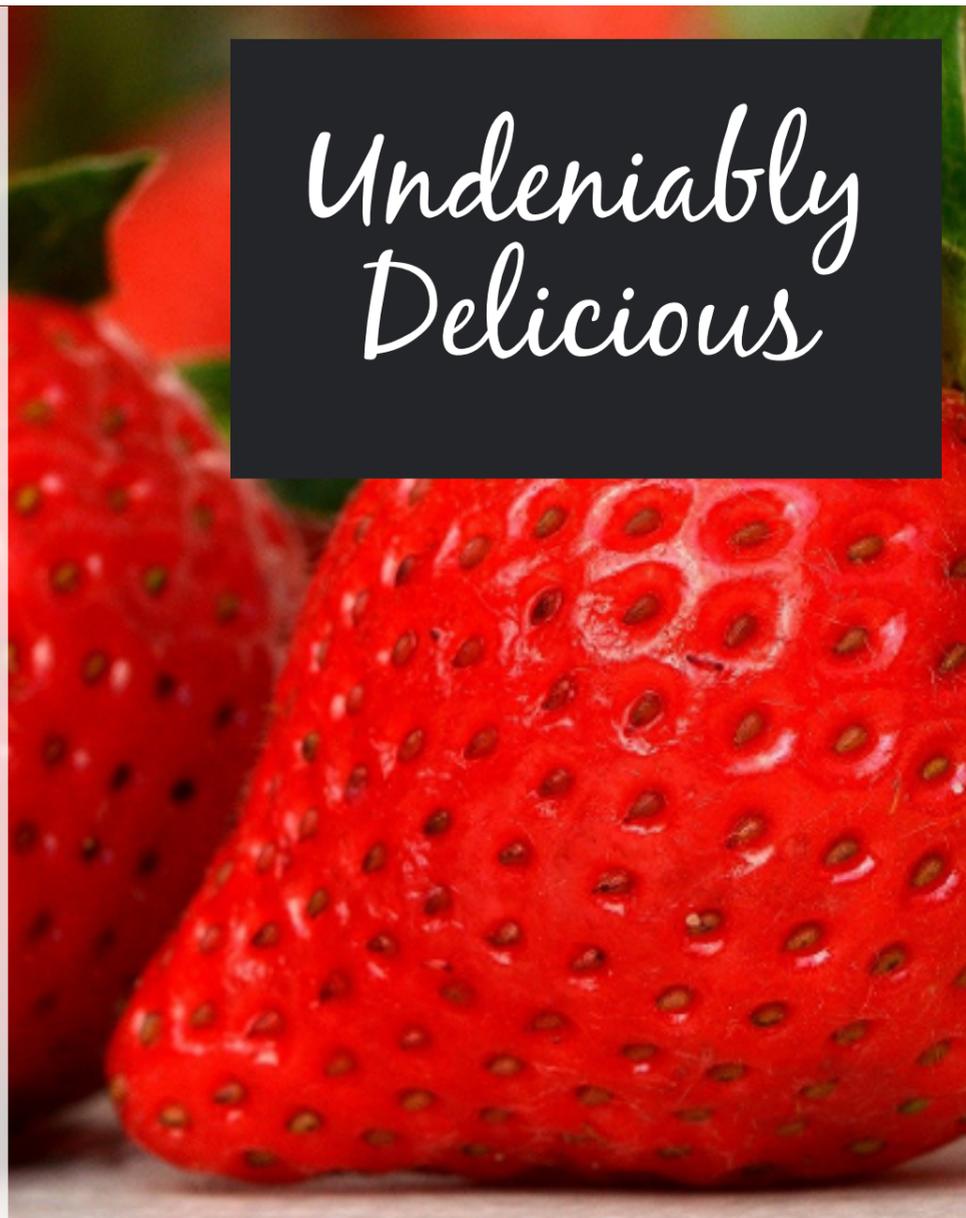
# Berries

Berries are undeniably delicious. They make a wonderful snack or dessert, whether you use one type or a mix of two or more. They're naturally sweet and are low in calories and extremely nutritious. They are among the healthiest foods you can eat.

They contain antioxidants, which help keep free radicals under control and are a great source of antioxidants, such as anthocyanins, ellagic acid, and resveratrol.

Berries may help improve blood sugar and insulin response and are a good source of fiber, including soluble fiber. Studies show that consuming soluble fiber slows down the movement of food through your digestive tract, leading to reduced hunger and increased feelings of fullness.

*Undeniably  
Delicious*



They may help lower cholesterol levels, and in addition to lowering cholesterol, berries provide other benefits for heart health, including improving the function of your arteries.

They help fight inflammation - Inflammation is your body's defense against infection or injury.

Berries may help reduce skin wrinkling, as their antioxidants help control free radicals, one of the leading causes of skin damage that contributes to aging.

They're delicious, nutritious, and provide a number of impressive health benefits.

# Berries



# GARDENING FOR THE SOUL

Linda Cooper

## GARDENING FOR THE SOUL

As the days start to lengthen after the cold winter months, and the sun's warmth begins to draw our attention to the outside, our inward focus turns outward to the season of planting, nurturing and growth. Plants sleeping deep within the soil, now reach up and break through the crust of the earth, being called forth by the sunlight. What has been hidden in the darkness begins its ascent to the light, coming into full expression, blossoming into the fullness of itself.

Spring provides us a brilliant visual of the magnificence of life, as

seedlings nurtured with water and sunlight, held within the womb of the earth, are birthed into the world of the senses.

As we step outside of our homes into the sunlight, into the fresh spring air, our senses are filled with sounds of birds and bees. The blanket of white snow is now replaced with vibrant greens, as we smell the first growth of spring, and feel the warm breeze that accompanies us on our outdoor adventures. It is a time of awakening, and connection.

This particular spring we are found in the most unusual of circumstances, living in a world of unknowns. A forced time of responsibility and reflection. A time for us to reconnect with ourselves and with the earth.

Planting a garden is a great way to ground ourselves. It gives us a sense of purpose and connection which we

need. It connects us to mother earth, and the gifts of life that she provides. Connecting to what is important and essential.

In preparing for our garden, we need to look at the many factors that will influence the best possible conditions for growth. The soil, the temperature, the timing, the sunlight exposure, all necessary to provide each



seedling, each plant with what it needs to flourish.

Putting our hands in the earth, we see the life that lives within the earth; the worms, and little critters that we co-exist with, but rarely are aware of. We see the life that is all around us, and how each piece is a part of the whole.

At times of uncertainty, where we feel powerless, we



do, in fact, have power over, our thoughts, choices, and actions. Planting a vegetable garden, for instance, gives us a sense of empowerment as we take control of our food source. It connects us to life and vitality and provides a sense of purpose and accomplishment.

For some it will be a brand new experience, that opens up a new community and a new perspective, because as we garden, we learn more about the environment and sustainability, and develop an appreciation for those that grow our food.

It can bring a sense of belonging as we are immersed in a relationship with the earth, the environment, the food we grow, and with ourselves. For in nurturing the plants, we nurture ourselves. As we give, we receive. What we plant in the soil, we plant in ourselves.

Working in our gardens, keeps us in the present moment, focused with all of our



senses and provides a reprieve from the external stresses in our lives.

Whether it be a vegetable garden or flower garden, we are in a process of creativity and creation. As gardeners, we are stewards of new, healthy, vibrant growth, and of manifesting beauty into the world. We need to realize that we too, are seeds upon this earth, and are the stewards that nurture ourselves to grow and blossom.

As we tend daily to our gardens, we come to know, that everything is connected. That we are not separate from the natural world, we are a part of it, and that with our hands in the soil, we can feel that deep connectivity. To not just know it, but to feel and experience it, on a tactile level.

In learning how some plants do best alongside other plants, we can see that, we also, need to grow alongside a nurturing environment, both internally and

externally. The soil in which our mind grows, needs to be watered, fed and weeded on a regular basis.

As we nurture the soil, we nurture our soul. So take your shoes off, feel the grass growing beneath your feet, feel the sunshine on your skin, and the wind in your hair. Decide what you want to grow, what you want to create. What do you want to plant deep within the soil? How do you want to emerge from the darkness into the light? What will make your garden grow?

For a healthy garden, we begin with a fertile foundation. With nutrient dense soil, and optimal growing conditions, and when we have this, we can all blossom where we are planted.

Linda Cooper

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## The Rose Garden

I was always a bit intimidated with the thought of growing roses, but last year I took the plunge and purchased 1 rose bush called the Dolly Parton. That's it that's all it took to fall in love. Now don't get me wrong I love all my plants and now my now multiple rose bushes.

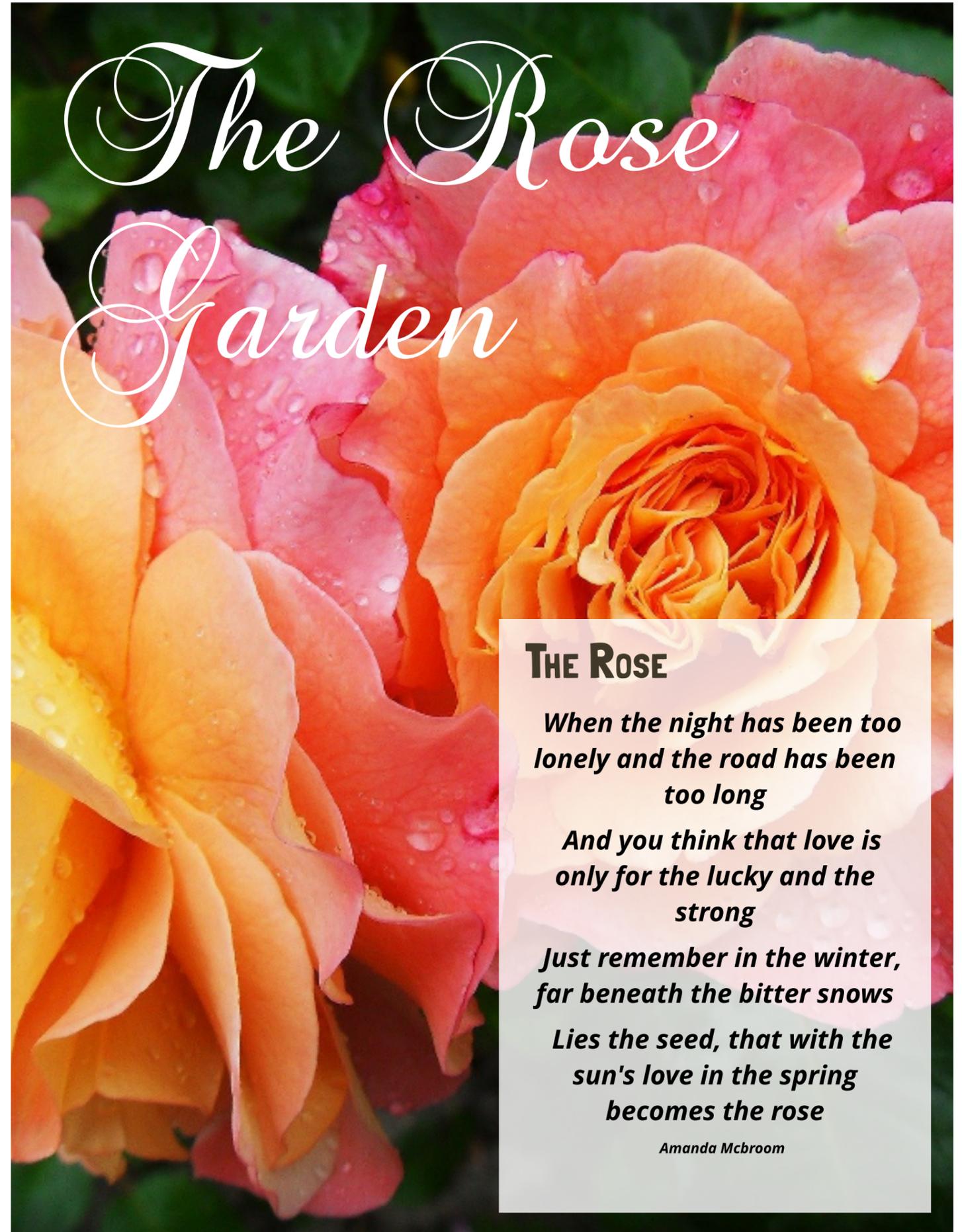
### Tips to beautiful roses that I found helpful

- When growing roses, it's important to choose a site receiving at least six hours of sun each day.
- Rose bushes must also be located in well-drained, fertile soil.
- Plant dormant roses in early spring (or fall).
- Potted plants can be planted any time between spring and fall, but preferably spring.
- Rose bushes need to be planted about 2 feet deep, with the hole large enough to accommodate the roots. Backfill the hole with soil, adding some well-rotted manure in with it and water

thoroughly.

- Mound up additional soil around the base of the plant.
- Roses require at least an inch of water weekly throughout their growing season, beginning in spring or following spring planting.
- While overhead watering is suitable before the onset of new growth, it is often better to water these plants at the soil line using soaker hoses or similar means.
- Rose bushes are very susceptible to fungal diseases, such as black spot and powdery mildew, especially when their foliage is kept too wet.
- Fertilizer for roses should also be applied in spring, following the label instructions carefully.
- Mulching your rose bush will help retain moisture and may also offer some winter protection.
- Pruning is another aspect to consider when caring for rose bushes. This often takes place once leaf buds appear in spring. Make cuts about 1/4 inch above the bud eyes and prune out any twiggy or unhealthy branches.

Reference - The Bulb-o-licious Garden



# The Rose Garden

## THE ROSE

*When the night has been too lonely and the road has been too long*

*And you think that love is only for the lucky and the strong*

*Just remember in the winter, far beneath the bitter snows*

*Lies the seed, that with the sun's love in the spring becomes the rose*

*Amanda Mcbroom*



# Backyard Barnyard

Many people dream about having farm animals on their property – and who wouldn't! Farm animals are just as cuddly and cute as cats and dogs. They can also provide us with eggs, milk, wool, and even meat if you so desire. But what do you pick? If only we could have them all. Well, if you have only a backyard, a couple of chickens is good. A bit more land? A goat is good for someone who has at least 200 square feet. They are also good for someone who wants milk but does not have much room for cattle. Sheep are very adaptable to smaller amounts of land, but you'll need to give them some extra TLC to have their needs met. In any case, you'll need some fencing and a shelter. And remember, animals get lonely too! Make sure they have at least one other animal friend, along with your companionship.



### Gardening

Growing your own food for the first time feels terrific, watch it grow & ripen under your care. It's one of the most important homesteading skills you can learn.

### Cooking

Learn to cook healthy meals. A home-cooked meal using your own grown vegetables is a satisfying & savory celebration of self-reliance.

### Baking Bread

Learn to bake your own bread - start simple and work your way up to sour dough bread. Keep bread recipes printed out and handy, include breads and buns that don't

need yeast.

### Preserving Food

Learn to preserve your harvest. Canning, both water bath or pressurized, depending on the acidity of the contents—will keep food safe and fresh, but make sure you learn correct techniques to avoid bacteria.

\*Bacteria is your friend with fermentation though

### Beekeeping

Bees are powerhouse pollinators, and providing shelter and care for the winged friends will reap rewards in your garden. Honeybees make that sweet, viscous foodstuff that's long

endeared their species to ours. Look for some classes offered locally to learn alongside a community of enthusiasts.

### Chicken Keeping

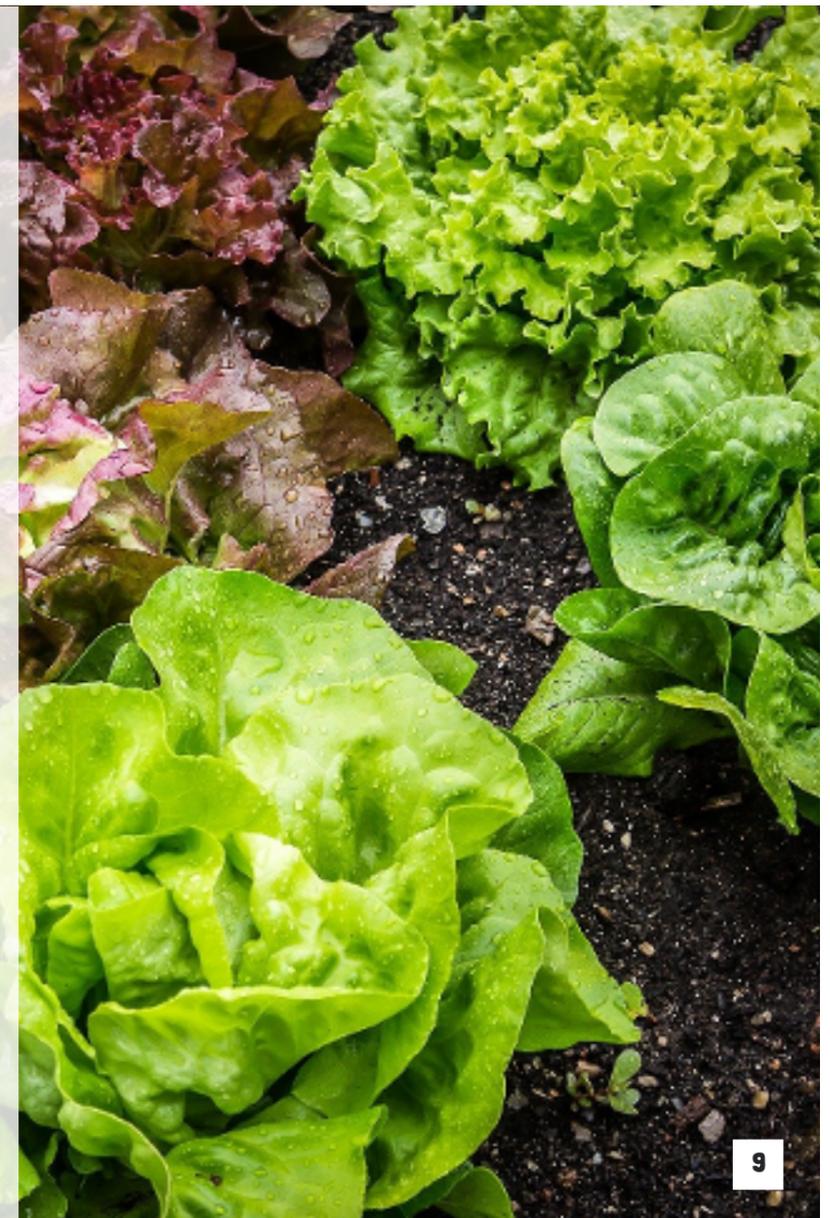
You'll need to provide shelter, as well as figure out how you'll deliver food and water. And there's some upkeep in terms of cleaning up poop and spent bedding, but, overall, chickens are a fun and easy addition to most homesteads.

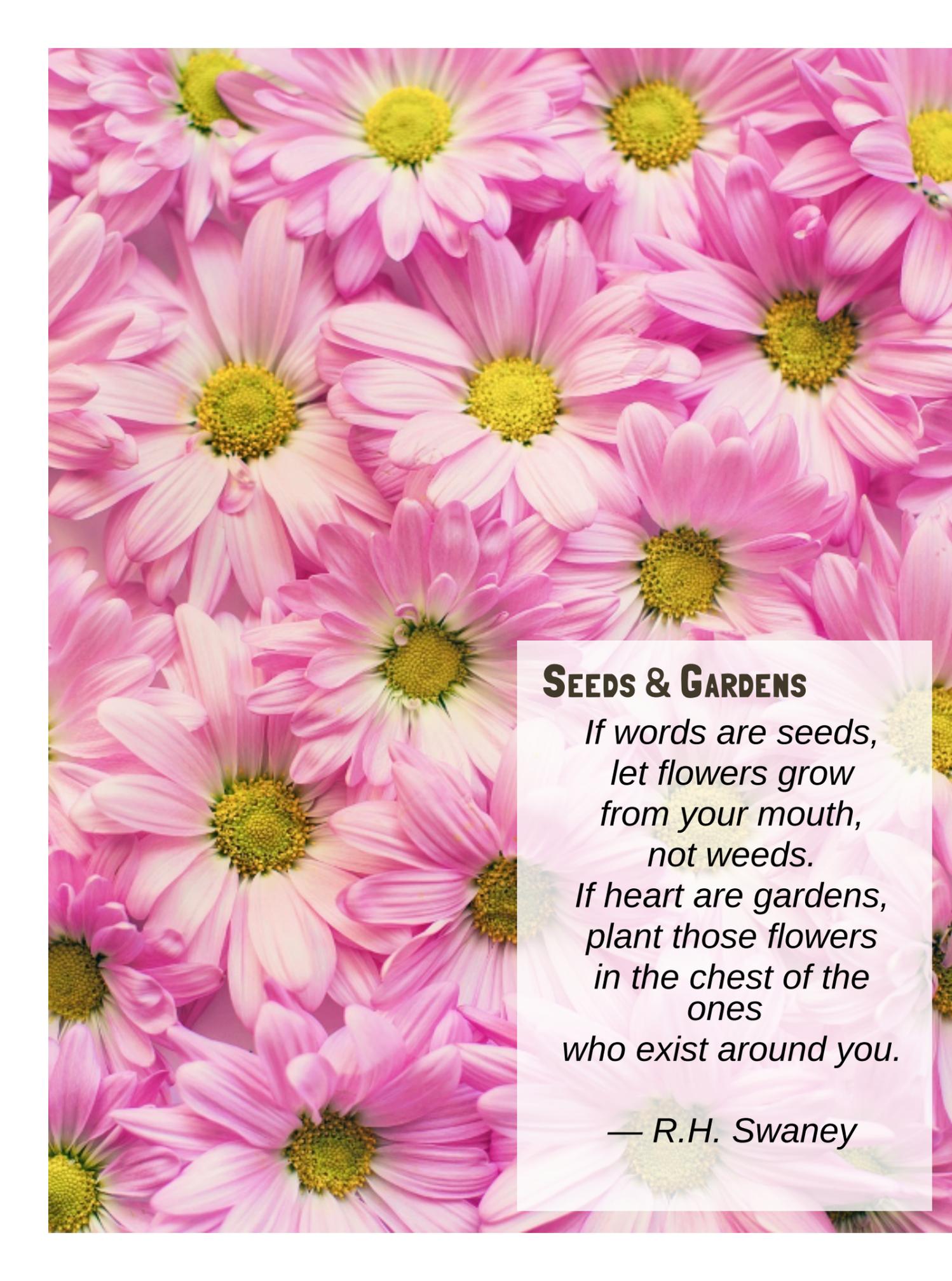
### Building and Maintaining Fencing

Whether you need to keep animals in or people out, you'll need to be able to build a secure fence that's up to the task at hand.



**Homesteading  
is a  
lifestyle  
of  
self-sufficiency**



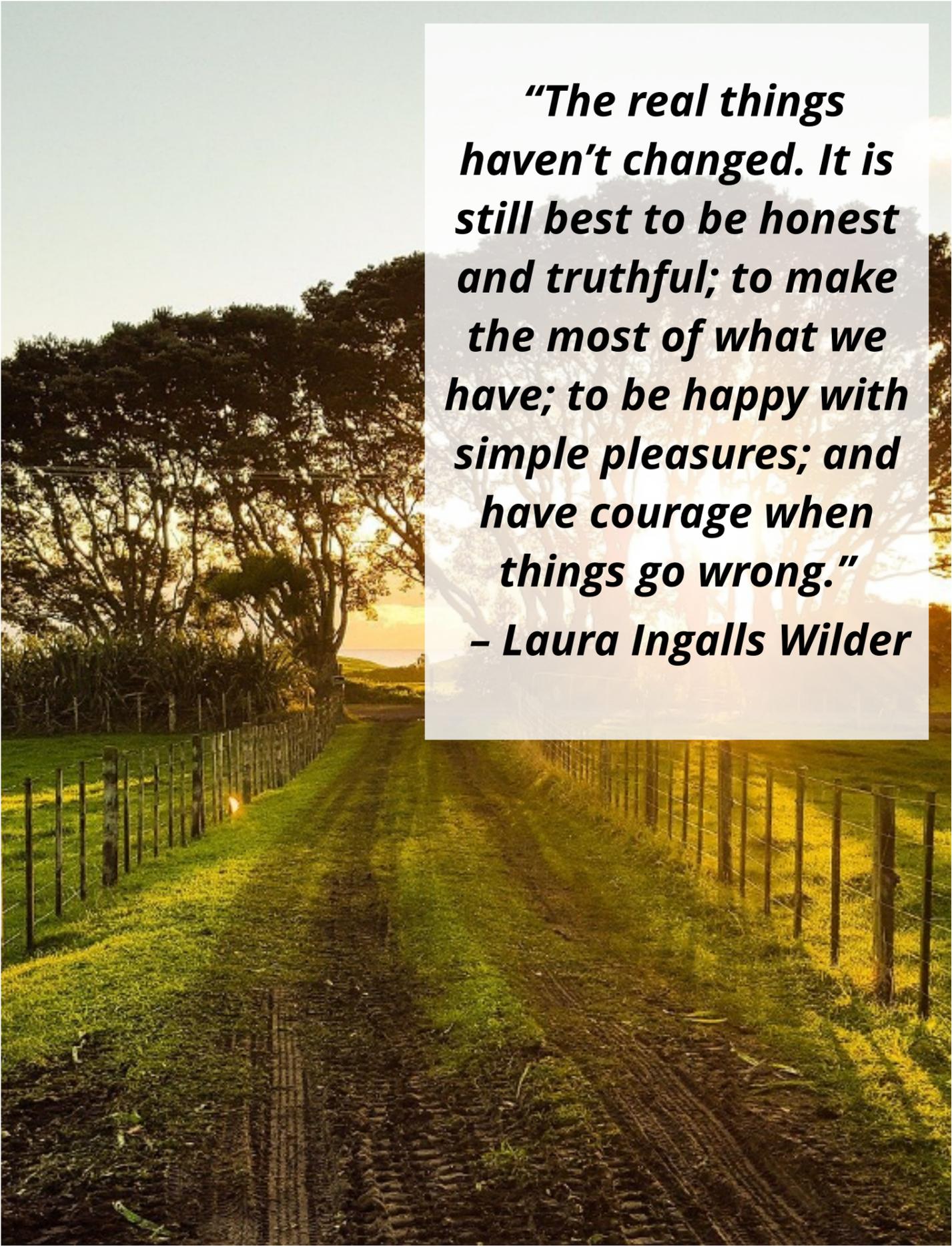


**SEEDS & GARDENS**

*If words are seeds,  
let flowers grow  
from your mouth,  
not weeds.*

*If heart are gardens,  
plant those flowers  
in the chest of the  
ones  
who exist around you.*

*— R.H. Swaney*



***“The real things  
haven’t changed. It is  
still best to be honest  
and truthful; to make  
the most of what we  
have; to be happy with  
simple pleasures; and  
have courage when  
things go wrong.”  
– Laura Ingalls Wilder***



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