

## **Gardens provide fond memories**

Gardens can be places to share and create lasting memories – memories of sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, experience, relationship... memories that live on.

Following the loss of my dad on October 4, I spent some time alone walking through my parents' landscape. My mother, surviving my father, is no longer able to garden. But my mom and dad enjoyed gardening.

In their landscape are two fairly young but producing pecan trees with the cage trap to catch squirrels that my dad had placed beside one of the trees. We always had pecan trees, even at the home in which I grew up. I have fond memories of fall, outside picking up pecans on a crisp autumn day with my mom, dad and siblings. My father planted the most recent trees a little too deep, deeper than I would have advised. His reasoning: he did not want to deal with shallow surface roots. I did not pursue the issue. Even though the trees were somewhat stunted, they did produce. They have a pretty good crop of pecans this year.

Their landscape includes a now large mulberry tree that I started from a cutting. The parent tree, which I climbed as a child, is long gone. But its offspring produces mulberries that are enjoyed by my mother and her grandchildren each spring.

Several sawtooth oaks that I gave to my dad some 24 years ago from a nursery that I operated are now providing shade at my parents' home.

My father and I transplanted a couple of camellias from my childhood home to my parents' current home many years ago. One survived. It eventually adapted to its new location, receiving more sun than advisable. It's now a large shrub, producing red flowers each winter.

My dad planted a Shell apple tree that I grafted. He planted it in the back corner of his yard where he had other fruit trees. He did get to see it flower and produce a few small apples. But the tree was not old enough to mature the fruit. I need to thank Dan Mullins, Extension Agent in Santa Rosa County, for introducing me to the Shell apple.

On October 9 I picked okra and peppers from the last garden that my dad would plant. The fruit of his labor continues... not only through a physical garden that he planted and cared for but through the lives that he planted into and cared for.

This represents only a few memories of moments shared in a garden. Spend time with a child in your garden and create warm memories for someone else. I'm very thankful that my dad did.

Larry Williams, UF/IFAS Extension Agent, Okaloosa County, October 15, 2009