

## **Why let your backyard be a source of worry?**

On the tenth anniversary of September 11, 2001, I'd like to rerun a portion of the article I wrote as a result of that day.

You'd be surprised how upset some people can be about a few weeds, a dying petunia or a tomato with a crack in it. They'll let small things upset their entire world. Too many people spend too much time letting too many small things bother them too much.

When my twin sister and I were growing up, an elderly couple would shell pecans and hand them to us over the fence that separated our yards. At five or six years old this was a treat for my sister and me.

I remember Mrs. Hunt sweeping their dirt driveway lined with coconut sized rocks. She used handmade brooms. I remember the pink flowering dogwoods in the spring. I remember the yellow and orange daylilies in the summer. I remember the fascination of seeing red spider lilies seemingly come from nowhere in the fall underneath deciduous trees as they displayed their autumn colors. I remember smelling a sweetshrub flower, which reminded me of sweet apples. The deep red blooms and the dark green leaves of this shrub complemented the white wooden wall on the east side of the Hunt's home.

I remember climbing an old mulberry tree in their backyard and picking and eating the berries. I remember watching Mr. Hunt prune grapevines growing on an overhead trellis. I remember learning about the history of a ginkgo tree planted outside a chicken pin in their side yard. I remember watching hummingbirds flying in and out of the reddish orange funnel-shaped blooms of a large trumpet vine growing on an old metal frame.

I don't remember the weeds, even though I know there must have been weeds in the Hunt's landscape. I know there was the occasional pecan that didn't fill out or that was worm infested. Those pecans were just tossed to the side. And I'm sure an occasional plant had to be replaced. But these are not the things that made lasting impressions for me.

Sure you'll have weeds in your yard, a dead plant, a worm in a fruit, etc. We can learn from these things. But don't let these things become the cause of worry. A landscape should be a source of pleasure, a place to learn, a place to pass along lasting memories.

With all the things to worry about in this world, why let your own backyard be one of them?

A plant clinic to help diagnose lawn, landscape and garden problems will be held September 15 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. in Fort Walton Beach at the Okaloosa County Extension Service building, 127 W. Hollywood Blvd. To participate, bring a fresh sample of the weed, plant, insect or 4-inch square of grass with roots attached.

Larry Williams, UF/IFAS County Extension Director, Okaloosa County, September 8, 2011