

Come to the Garden  
Sharon W. Betters

Today's Treasure

*For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace.*

*Ecclesiastes 3:1-8*

Dear Friends,

Whenever I heard the old hymn, *In the Garden*, my thoughts immediately travel back in time to the many Sunday morning and evening services spent in our little church. Memories of sitting through long sermons, timing the pastor's prayers, and rubbing my grandmother's soft skin along with the fun of the turtle races held every year during Vacation Bible School flood my mind. I know every word of this sweet hymn because we sang it so many times! This week's guest writer, Patsy Kuipers, also known as The Gardening Grammie, reminds me of this hymn as well. Through her love of all things gardening, Patsy helps open our eyes to treasures planted in the dirt - often hidden unless we are looking for them. Widowed at age 38, she was blessed to be gainfully employed for all the years she spent raising two daughters on her own. When the corporation she worked for just over thirty years eliminated her job, she returned to school to study horticulture, a passion born of caring for the garden her husband left as part of his legacy. Patsy is Grammie to three young but enthusiastic garden helpers. She enjoys teaching them about plants and the One who created them.

Patsy started her blog, Back 2 the Garden ([patsykuipers.com](http://patsykuipers.com)), to tell others of God's great love and faithfulness. In 2020, she realized a long-time dream when she compiled some of the lessons she's learned in her garden into a book, "Be Still, Quiet Moments With God in My Garden. We are so grateful to welcome Patsy as a regular Daily Treasure guest writer.

On Saturday Patsy encourages us to recognize how the seasons reflect our own spiritual journeys. She writes:

I once attended a presentation where the speaker began with, "Summer, fall, and winter are seasons - spring is a miracle." I've thought about her comment every

spring since. Early warm spells begin to nudge plants from their winter slumber in January here in the South. Witchhazel, Lenten roses, and paperbush start a floral parade that continues for multiple weeks as plants take turns in the spotlight. Trees, flowers, and baby birds – all embody the joyful message of rebirth, which in turn stimulates hope and rejuvenation in us.

But spring gives way to summer, and tender ephemerals<sup>(1)</sup> disappear for another year as heat-loving specimens flourish. Summer annuals and perennials bloom, then set and disperse their seeds before beginning their decline. Fall arrives. Crops are ripe for harvest, the fruit of spring planting and summer tending. Soon daylight hours decrease, as does the temperature, and autumnal leaves create a riotous display of color – one last hurrah before they let go and blanket the ground for the winter.

Ah, winter. Based on my observations, I've concluded it is the most misunderstood, under-appreciated season, at least from a gardening standpoint. Those unfamiliar with the ways of plants scan the leafless, apparently lifeless landscape and pronounce, "everything's dead." I used to think that too, but my horticulture studies dissuaded me from that notion. For instance, some seeds won't germinate without scarification<sup>(2)</sup>, some bulbs won't bloom without adequate chill time, and many plants depend on the decreased daylight and increased darkness that accompany winter to flower at the appropriate time.

My newfound knowledge has given me a different perspective. Now when I contemplate winter vistas, I prefer to think the plants are resting while building reserves for the next season of fruitfulness.

Sometimes I think it would be nice to live in a constant state of springtime, emotionally and spiritually speaking – productive, energetic, surrounded by resurgent, hope-producing, joy-filled circumstances. But, like the plants, God knows we need all the seasons to produce abundant fruit and to become more like Jesus.

We need to slow down and be still, to rest and draw near to God in all seasons, but we're most likely to do so during the winters of our souls – times of loss and suffering. For it's then we realize our utter reliance upon God, a dependence present every moment, but most evident when we come to the end of our supposed self-sufficiency.

My own winters have convinced me of the veracity of Elisabeth Elliot's declaration, "The deepest things that I have learned in my own life have come from the deepest suffering. And out of the deepest waters and the hottest fires have come the deepest things that I know about God."<sup>(3)</sup>

Yet, like the trees and flowers, I've emerged able to bear more fruit, because I know my Father and His ways more intimately. Signs of life return, as our winter gives way to

another cycle of spring planting, summer tending, and fall harvesting, a cycle that will continue in us and the natural world until our final winter. Our bodies will rest in the ground, waiting for reunion with our souls when we're called Home, glorified, and welcomed into the joy of eternal spring. (Patsy Kuipers, Daily Treasure, Saturday).

Let's take the time to go "into the garden" with Patsy, and listen carefully for the voice of Jesus.

### **In the Garden**

I come to the garden alone,  
While the dew is still on the roses,  
And the voice I hear falling on my ear  
The Son of God discloses.

• *Refrain*

And He walks with me, and He talks with me,  
And He tells me I am His own;  
And the joy we share as we tarry there,  
None other has ever known.

*Charles A. Miles 1913*

I am so happy to welcome back Patsy to Daily Treasure.

Treasured by Him,

Sharon

(1) Ephemeral plants are generally found in deciduous woods. They take advantage of the sunlight available in early spring before the leaves return to the trees. They bloom and decline in a relatively short period of time, lasting from a few days to a few weeks, depending on the plant.

(2) Scarification involves weakening, opening, or otherwise altering the coat of a seed to encourage germination.

(3) Elisabeth Elliot, "Suffering is Never for Nothing", lecture series, 1989.