

Perennials versus annuals. – Helen Ackermann

In this season of gardening, I've analyzed my relationship to annual and perennials. It seems I have not valued perennials as much as annuals. Perhaps because my love of gardening was always impacted by a busy schedule, I was glad to plant annuals and see the instant results. I have a tendency to like immediate results. You do the work and do the planning and the results should come quickly.

Perhaps this is not the way to perceive not only gardening but our spiritual life. The thing about perennials is that they take time and patience. You plant one year and then you have to nurture the plants by paying attention to their growth. Of course you need to take them through the winter which can be a problem. The nurturing part is a year round operation. Annuals are so simple. You get a flat of already booming plants, put them in the ground or in containers and you have immediate beauty. Of course at the end of the season, they are done. Life does not continue.

Our spiritual life is much more like a perennial garden. It takes nurturing and it takes attention. It needs to pass through the winter of our lives when it seems to be somewhat dead. It passes through seasons of growth and dormancy. It takes attention. One of the most wonderful things about a perennial garden is that it comes with its surprises as plants produce much more than you might have thought or in other situations less than you thought. So it is with our life in relationship with God through Jesus. At times we have new insight, at times we are more dormant than not, but always God is surprising us if we keep at it. And that is the key; a spiritual life that is faithfully nurtured will grow eventually and with it will come many God given surprises.