

Go Green? That Isn't a New Concept



I remember my first garden; I was about nine years old and decided I wanted to plant one in our back yard. With my mother and father's blessing, I proceeded to dig with a small shovel, turning each handful over and then hoeing and racking out all the clumps. When I had finished, two sides of our yard adjacent to the garage was turned and ready to plant. I remember having great success with lettuce, radishes and carrots. I planted some pole beans and corn, but the corn didn't quite live up to the standards we were used to living in the corn country of northern Indiana. I would go to the garden each day to see what had changed over-night. Sometimes it amazed me how a squash or bean had grown in the 24 hours. Every child should be encouraged to grow a garden. It is such a great learning tool. I was made responsible for keeping it weeded and watered. I remember the satisfaction of bringing the fruits (and vegetables) of my labor

to show my proud parents. They ate radishes by the bunches, even though I couldn't stand them. I'm sure they were sick of them after a couple weeks, but they always acted excited.

My father was a tomato-aholic much like I am today. We would eat tomatoes in everything, whether it called for it or not in the recipe. I loved to harvest those fresh tomatoes, but by the end of the growing season, when the first frost would kill the leaves on the vines, which usually coincided with my birthday in October, what I really enjoyed was bagging up the green tomatoes, then placing them on our window sill and waiting for them to change colors. I continued to plant a garden until I reached high school, when my parents did the unthinkable and sold our house and moved into an apartment. I did manage to plant some maple trees that I found growing behind one of our trash can several years before we moved. Those trees today are monsters that soar 50 feet over the old back yard, covering my old gardens.

I guess once you become a gardener it stays with you your whole life. Some people may be a little better at it than others, but I have always found the time spent in the garden well worth the trouble. Maybe I could do without the no-see-ums and deer flies though.

The second annual Cassina Garden Walk will take place the first weekend in May, on view will be what the real pros can do with a path of dirt. All I can do is dream that one day my yard will be as grand. The four gardens on Sea Island, and three on St Simons, plus the Tabby Cabins and Gardens on Gascoigne Bluff will amaze even the most savvy gardener. Tickets are on sale now online at www.cassinagardenclub.org, or you may walk up to the Tabby Cabins and purchase them the days of the Walk. There is much more to the weekend's event than the tour, a market with numerous vendors that will entice you with their wares for the garden, and Friday evening Steve Bender, who is well known for his work with the magazine *Southern Living*, will share his stories and wisdom with those attending. Oh, and you might see me at garden number six, painting on the grounds, as part of the art in the gardens, which is also a new aspect of this year's event.

Hope to see you out enjoying our beautiful islands.

Bob Swinehart

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On The Cover:
Allan Wynn's sculpture, "Rose" located at Garden #4 on Sea Island

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contents

April 23, 2008

4,5
A.W. Jones Heritage Center
Gala and Grand Opening

7
2008 Mozart Society
Winners' Concert

6
Betty McCartney's
Surprise Birthday Luncheon

8
Spotlight On
Hillary Parker

9
Around
Town

10
Health Wise
by Diane G. Bowen, M.D.

11
Retirement Luncheon
for Virginia Smith

12
Money Matters
by Buddy McNeese, CRPC

13
Reflection on Real Estate
by Signature Properties Group, Inc.

14
Maloy-Frost
Shower

14
Coastal National Exhibit
At Glynn Art

16
Afternoon
with the Authors

17
Glynn County Eagle Club
Low Country Boil

22
CASA Luncheon
& Fashion Show

24, 25
Gallery News & Views
by Millie Wilcox

26
Bill Shipp's Georgia
by Bill Shipp

27
Blooming Issues
by Anne Ditmer

28
Book Nook
by Cary Knapp

29
Pet Page
by James Hornbuckle, DVM

30
BCCA
Closes Season

31
Let's Ask Flo
by Florence Packard Anderson

32
Worship & Praise
by Rev. Timothy Steffen

33
Taste of Glynn

34
Best Bets

