

Aches of regret over the drumbeat of frustration

What motivates you to garden? Unconsciously, everything we do out there involves "why" and reveals a bit of our philosophy.

Physical and technical challenges aside, we also think and feel. And, like with everything worthwhile, putting our hearts and minds into gardening inevitably unleashes rollercoasters of emotional responses and reactions.

Here's the rub. Though everyone has an overlapping dollop of both, there are two main approaches: product-driven and process-savoring.

Goal-focused gardeners looking for Lawn of the Month, freezers filled with home-grown produce, windowsills of African violets, the first tomato, or other hard-won accomplishments or accolades use everything at hand in search of efficiency.

Those who approach gardens this way research, plan ahead, keep mental to-do checklists, and show im-



Take on a relaxed gardening approach.

To them, the actual making of sun tea is more important than how it tastes compared with kitchen brewed. Every passing butterfly gives pause for celebration. They marvel at new spider webs, love the smell of burning leaves, don't mind sticky fingers from eating warm tomatoes

right from the vine. I'm bent this way to the point where, anticipating my tomatoes not making it to full maturity I

sometimes used a Sharpie pen to draw smiley faces on green tomatoes – which might be all I got, results wise, but for that day it was enough.

You can easily see all this in how people approach lawns. It goes beyond the

regular maintenance of keeping lawns healthy and neat, or the little extra exercise and sunshine we can get every couple of weeks.

Whether happily or grudgingly, we mow partly according to how we were raised, from powerful fam-

challenges by paying others to do the chores. Or, like me in spite of my love of a well-tended lawn, I got to go swimming until I had finished the lawn, so to this day I'm not a happy camper behind a mower. Dad's motivation wasn't mine.

Others mow, edge, and rake or blow leaves because,

like making up the bed even all that; it just matters less when no one will see it, a

finished lawn gives a feeling of satisfaction, of being able to look over shoulders for visual proof of something accomplished. Helps us feel like we have a grip on life.

Felder Rushing is an 11th-generation American gar-

dener who has traveled to all fifty states (lectured in 36 and across five continents In some neighborhoods it's a strict requirement; even in the smallest village there are ways to make people keep their lawns mowed. In Jackson you can be dragged to environmental court to explain yourself; if you don't comply the city will mow it for you – and fine you for the cost.

Whether due to physical or time constraints, or simply not caring enough to do what's required, lots of lawn lovers create smaller, easier-to-tend "throw rug" lawns or outsource the



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