

# Perception comes from our world views

Decisions, decisions. In my garden I'm darned if I do, darned if I don't, so here's a plea for thoughtful empathy, that borders on a rant.

While cooling down after a taking a midday shower, which I needed to get rid of the clamminess after an hour of midsummer gardening, I started musing about some of the hard decisions I had just made.

Not to get all Zen, but it's accepted by most folks that phenomena of the world, including solid objects and experiences and everything in between, are seen in different, sometimes conflicting, ways by different people based on other factors.

There are lots of aphorisms along these lines. One person's perfume is another person's stink. When Billy Bob painted his girlfriend's name on the water tower, "the whole town said he shoulda used red, but it looked good to Charlene in John Deere Green."

Other words, what I do in my garden that makes sense to me at the time may not be what others would do. I've changed my thoughts about and approach to some things I once thought were ironclad. Heck, I often do one thing part of the year, and the opposite later on. Live and learn, eh? This doesn't mean I'm fickle, or capricious; it's just

using logic as I approach shifting circumstances, as opposed to being stubborn or hardheaded. As Ralph Emerson put it, "A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of small minds."

I make hard decisions every time I go into my garden. Do I thump away caterpillars, or let them grow into big beautiful butterflies? Is this Bermuda grass a lawn plant or a flowerbed weed? Are tomatoes more important than possums? Should I learn to love my neighbors' free-roaming cats even though they eat songbirds and lizards, then relieve themselves in flowerbeds? Should I leave some out-of-the-way poison ivy for its wildlife benefits and striking fall colors?

This week I took advantage of our long growing season by planting some fall vegetables, including corn, squash, and new tomato and pepper plants. But to do it I had to pull up some equally valid others such as crabgrass, which is both a serious weed to some gardeners and a host plant for the larvae of frenetic little "skippers" which, neither butterfly nor moth, are fascinating pollinators.

To compound the affront, I found some "bush killer" vine, a new invasive plant that is potentially more destructive than kudzu; I tried pulling it, but it keeps returning from tiny bits of roots left in the ground. So, I got rid of it completely and safely by

squirting a little Roundup on the little plants.

Before any of you go off on my using Roundup, let me assure you that I am aware of the concerns, and decided it's safer to me and my garden than the alternatives. As a matter of dosage over time, there's danger in overusing it, just like consuming too much red meat, fried food, and that occasional glass of

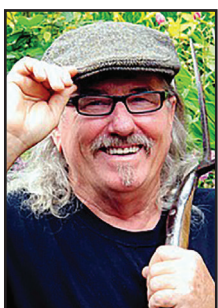
wine. This is all true, but as I mentioned in the opening to this column, a lot of perception comes from our world views, not reality.

By the way, kudzu has beautiful wisteria-like flowers that smell like grape bubblegum. And all parts are edible, unlike like the tamer vegetables I just planted. And there are many more acres of high-maintenance, monocrop Asian turfgrass lawns in Mississippi than

kudzu. Not making a value call, just a statement of fact, which you can interpret according to your own mind set.

Tomatoes or butterflies? Weeds or wildflowers? Darned if I do or don't.

*Felder Rushing is a Mississippi author, columnist, and host of the "Gestalt Gardener" on MPB Think Radio. Email gardening questions to rushingfelder@yahoo.com.*



FELDER RUSHING



Skippers depend on crabgrass to survive.

## DAY AFTER DAY

By Janet Wise

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