

A Love Affair With a Garden

by
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When did it all begin? Was it in a baby carriage under a 'Louis Philippe Rose' or perhaps it was in the genes from two parents who felt all life springs from the soil. I'm not sure, but the fascination and thrill of the beauties of nature have intensified over the years. It has led me to explore gardens all over the world, yet with all these years, the awe and the thrill of it has not diminished. This is the true test of a great love.

I must have been a difficult child, for I was never allowed far from supervision. When this did occur it was delightful to hide under the low branches of a giant pittosporium or safely hidden behind the ligustrum, picking the berries, putting them in mason jars, playing like I was making wine. Never did I

The principal's of design that govern art and architecture also influence your garden. Unity, balance, proportion, scale, accent are the elements, whether planned or unplanned, that add the intrigue to art in all its forms. I worked with Frank McCall, architect from Moultrie, Atlanta, and Sea Island, who never veered from these principals - and if you were



under his tutelage, you had better not either. Certain rules of proportion and scale, which perhaps Frank had studied from Palladio, governed his design. And I might add his design lives on today, years after his passing. So, when I see again this perfectly balanced all green tapestry, I fall in love all over again with the formal garden.



dream that I was experiencing what every garden should offer, a feeling of enclosure, that marvelous feeling of something overhead giving you protection from the outside world. This is so beautifully done by Vita Sackville-West at Sissinghurst, the renowned garden in England she designed with her husband, Harold Nicholson. The same feelings of enclosure you experience in great theatres with their tight entrance lobby that opens to a large auditorium. Isn't it strange that over all these millenniums the same longing for protection governs us all? Perhaps that is why early man sought a cave and dogs and till this day still like their own enclosure.



But love can be a fickle thing for on the other hand I find fun, relaxation and gayety in the beloved cottage garden. This garden reminds me of a beautiful, bouffant 'settled' woman with her flowery dress, large hat, abundant bounty overflowing with all of it graciousness. This garden has no beginning and no end. Instead of one focal point as in a formal garden there might be one point of interest around every corner. As I grow older, this is the garden of my golden years. Blessedly the eyesight fails just enough not to distinguish a weed from a perennial. They all mesh together for one glorious display each season.

Goodwood Museum and Gardens in Tallahassee, the historic estate dating from the 1840 is a perfect example of this free flowing garden where red lycoris (hurricane) lilies still pop up every fall to forewarn of the traditionally stormy season.

So this love affair goes on and on. Who knows the object of my affection in the near future might be the dry garden with succulents, cactus, rock, and stones. This affair never becomes dull. The change, the challenge, the excitement of it all continues.

