



KGI News: Giving Gardens

Thu, 06/17/2010 - 10:21 -- Roger Doiron

Dear Kitchen Gardener,

This is a different sort of gardening season for me and my garden. I seem to say that every year because of weird weather or exceptional challenges like last year's late blight scourge in the Northeast, but this time I really mean it. This year, you see, I'm sowing where I know I won't reap.

As you might recall from a previous newsletter, my family and I are moving back to Belgium this summer for a year so that our three sons can "re-root" themselves in their other language and culture. My wife is from Wallonia, the predominantly French-speaking southern region of Belgium. After nine years of living in the US, we decided it was time to get the family back to Europe for a French-language refresher course. At least that's the official version of the story. The unofficial one is that we want to have easier access to Belgium's delicious [fries](#) [1] and chocolate, but that doesn't sound nearly as responsible.

For those of you who have moved before, you can imagine the many tasks involved. And for those of you who are parents, you know that doing anything with children, whether it's moving houses for a year or moving a playdate by an hour, adds an extra layer of complexity to life. It would have been easy to cross the garden off the list this year as one task too many, but I couldn't have done that, for me or for the family who will be renting our house while we're away. Gardening is part of who I am and part of the unique character of our house. It's also my main way of marking the passage of time and connecting with nature. I know it's June when the strawberries are ripening in my backyard and when the chubby-cheeked neighborhood chipmunk is stealing off with them one by one.

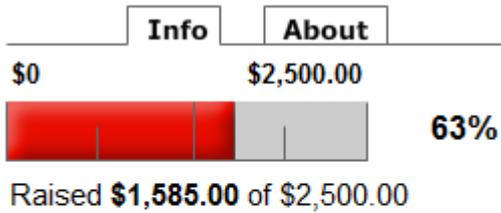
Given all this, you can imagine that it's a strange feeling planting a garden for someone else, but also a strangely satisfying one. With each seed or plant that goes in the ground, I feel a bit like I'm wrapping a birthday present that will be opened and hopefully enjoyed 50, 60, or, in the case of carrots, 75 days later. My family and I won't be here for the party, but we will have fun imagining the wonder, pleasure, and nourishment each little gift will bring our tenants.

In fact, the experience makes me realize that this is a feeling that more gardeners should have at least once in their gardening lives. There are many people and groups who would love to receive a kitchen garden or garden-fresh produce as a present. I hope you'll think a bit about who they are in your community and how you might make it happen. It could be the most thoughtful and appreciated gift you give this year. If you don't believe me, ask my local chipmunk.

Warm regards...from Maine...for now,

Roger Doiron
KGI

PS: In case you're wondering, I won't be spending all my time next year eating chocolate and fries. Through the miracle of the internet and Skype, I'll be taking KGI on the road with me and will be able to do everthing I need to do to keep KGI going and growing from over there. I'll use the opportunity to reach out to different gardeners and gardening groups while over there and will be attending the bi-annual Terra Madre gathering in Turin, Italy in October. [Let me know](#)[2] if there's a person (you?) or group you feel I should meet or a garden I must see. Thanks.



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