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On Ups and Downs and on Flexibility

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Ups and Downs are in abundance at the Meteora Rock Garden in central Greece,partly shown in the picture.Ups are climbed while Downs are rapelled.Both ways ropes are used,but not ordinary ones.Climbing ropes are designed to strech under impact and such they catch a fall of even several meters reasonably soft.And that's how the rope and the climber's back are prevented from braking.

Although my vegetable garden is considerably more level than these rock towers,it definitely has it's ups and downs depending on the year as well as on the mistakes I make.Some crops do very well,others not,and some may be even wiped out by diseases and/or pests.And yet,my year-around results are reasonably good or better than that.And they are stable so.

The explanation of this lies in the large number of crops I grow,of each a few plants only,sometimes only one single plant.Presently, I grow 17 crops in a garden sized 10 sqm/107sqft all in all,yard,balcony containers and growing towers included, throughout the year.Of course, I enjoy a long growing season, almost throughout the year with season extension gadgets, but even in a real snow climate it would be only a few less. When, at least to some extent due to my own mistakes, my zucchini were destroyed completly and beans and tomatoes were killed prematurely last year within a few weeks only, the year's overall result was still very good. In fact, I was surprised myself.

So, biodiversity is good for Your garden.This way Ups and Downs balance each other out. Besides coming a little closer to a sustainable oasis with insects, soil wildlife and even other animals - beneficial and not - pests and diseases will have a harder time spreading in a biodiverse garden. In fact, it looks like the beneficial creatures are the first to leave when You press down on Your garden. Where this leaves Homo Sapiens, who usually is the last one who goes, You decide Yourself.

And then, there are rules. Just as mountaineering and climbing, gardening is governed by rules. And by forging and applying our own rules we claim our maturity. Not always successfully.

To me, my rules are the rope I want to stay clipped to, but I have to have the required room to face the unpredicted. Things do not always work as expected or as they did the years before. This year, the only sweet potatoes I could get my hands on easily turned out to have been treated - food grade they were - and did not sprout. So, it was either go through considerable trouble to get seed grade potatoes - and probably be late for planting them - or grow something else on the spot. I chose the latter. And of great help in this was my not too firm planting schedule and crop rotation rule: for some plants I keep a strict four year rotation, these will either grow where they are planned to or they will not grow at all this year. But these are only a few, and with all the others I have greater liberty to shift and move them around the garden. The only minimum criteria I keep with these - the majority - is having grown something else before they go onto the same spot again.

A rope that leaves You enough room to move will actually encourage You to stay clipped to it.

Image (optional):

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