



Doing Good in the Garden: A Lazy Gardener Tries Growing Hope

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It's been a little while since you've heard from us on Growing Hope's blog...there's always a lot going on at the here and the blog can get neglected from time to time (it isn't quite as fragile as our plants). Anyway, get excited, because from now on, we'll be posting to the blog every Tuesday morning about all things Growing Hope. Today's post is written by Anna Beach, our Social Enterprise Coordinator and Americorps VISTA.

Friday, March 22nd was my birthday (I turned 24). Given the close proximity of my birthday to the first day of spring, I have been conditioned from birth to associate the two. Blooming crocuses, birds chirping, a thaw in the air...and my birthday. I know what you're thinking: it's been snowy and cold and awful...not spring weather at all. If it weren't for the flats of seedlings sitting literally everywhere in the Growing Hope Center, I might have forgotten that it's supposed to be spring, too. Which brings me to my point: being around plants, even in an auxiliary way, is just good for the soul. Plants are a great reminder that nurturing things are happening in our world, though much evidence may point to the contrary. At Growing Hope, we're trying, little by little, to bring some good into every day through better connection to plants and healthy food.

Now for a disclaimer: I'm probably the least garden/health-food-centric person of anyone at Growing Hope. I don't particularly like to get dirty, despite the fact that I am the face of the "gets dirty" t-shirt on our website. I have a history of accidentally killing plants, eschewing many outdoor activities, and alternating the weeks where I eat healthy produce-laden meals with weeks where I consume an inordinate number of Reese's cups and frozen pizzas. And I drink so much diet coke that my graduating class in my sorority predicted that ten years from our graduation, I would have a lucrative endorsement deal. The point being, that, while I recognize the benefits of gardening vegetables and advocate for everyone to have equal access to healthy food, I have yet to successfully incorporate those principles fully into my life.

In my marketing brain, I like to think that you can make anything accessible to anyone if you approach it in the right way. At some point, perhaps even I will be crazy for growing tomatoes or peppers or lettuce, if I find a unique way to relate to the gardening process. Over the past few months, I've been working on developing the new social enterprise line of garden products and services we recently unveiled (check out our website for more info). As an unsuccessful past gardener (and really, I'm talking about a few potted plants...in college...) I've worked really hard to make the line as full-service and accessible as possible, even to those who don't consider themselves gardeners. As much as I love the fact that our executive director posts completely serious facebook statuses that, paraphrased, read something like, "SOO excited to shovel compost on my day off," I probably won't ever enjoy that activity. Our line of products and services is tailored to fit both types of people.

So the goal is, over the next few months, to share a variety of posts that make veggie gardening accessible to lots of different people from lots of different perspectives. On a rough Michigan winter's day, sometimes curling up in bed with a pint of ice cream and something on Netflix seems the only appropriate ending to the day (and yes, I speak from experience.) I'll make a concerted effort, and would love for you to do the same,

to transition from that comfortable, though ultimately not nurturing (especially if you watch a depressing movie, of which there are many on Netflix) behavioral pattern. Imagine knowing that even if the world seems as though it is falling apart, you can go home at night and cook yourself a delicious, healthy, local, and organic meal from plants that you have nurtured from seedling to bumper crop. Oh, and since you purchased your supplies from Growing Hope, you're basically saving the world one tomato at a time :)

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