



Tips to Soothe Your Soul

...through gardening



Brenda H. Greene
Author Speaker

- **The idea** of our son's memory garden began shortly after his death. During one of our many family hugs, our son Michael suggested that it would be best to have his brother near so he and his sister Kate could visit him daily. The idea of the garden then grew – with a small pond and frog fountain; an encased baseball from his high school baseball team; gifted statues, stones, and bird feeders; an encased football from the high school team where I taught; and other garden memorabilia. Once we let our friends and family know of this decision, it became a wonderful venue for them to donate and feel a part of this healing process. We also received help in

selecting flowers and plants for this specific garden by our local garden shop.



Contact Us:

www.brendahgreene.com

bhahngreene@gmail.com

- **The physical care** of a garden forces you to tunnel your concentration on the actual digging, planting, and replanting which becomes a physical release for grief. Gardens take physical and mental effort. I found that my son's memory garden was one of the best ways to deal with this horrific grief process. Not only was it a physical release, it also became a personal reflection of my love. The growth of a tree, plant, flower, bush, etc., all reflected the continual love we have for our son. Just as our grieving process and healing change through the years so does the Memory or Healing Garden.
- **The stages** of spring, summer, fall, and winter also helped me deal with the various stages of grief; likened to the shock, the denial, the bargaining with God, and the final acceptance one endures, they all intermingle and rarely come in a certain pattern; they tend to overlap. With a garden, I was gently reminded that with the hardships of winter, there came spring with its new budding flowers that gave way to summer which gently offered colors of beauty of a new season. Gardening was a way to express the life and death cycle of all living things.
- **It is refreshing** to change the garden from time to time. Therefore, I would recommend that you might keep record of where and what you

planted because it is easy to forget the flowers and plants through the different seasons. Plus, try to include family members in your choices which may help them cope as well with their own healing process.

- **There is joy** in selecting certain flowers or plants for specific reasons. For instance, five months prior to my son's death, I lost my mother. Her favorite flower was the Iris so I planted a group behind our son's memorial stone as if to cradle him with my mother's love. Daffodils were immediately planted as Joby had at one time admired the "happiness" of the daffodil and they reminded me of him. A bleeding heart was a natural choice to include and I also started planting yarrow, dianthus, columbine, and used our son's boots as a flower planter. I planted these arrangements in places that we could all enjoy all-the-while keeping in mind where these specific flowers would best. A Memory Garden can be a natural, renewable tribute to your loved one. What better way to remember the one you love by representing them through the beauty of nature? My garden was located a short walking distance from the back of our home. It was about 100-200 feet in length and 20 feet deep in the beginning but it time it grew and expanded. A lesson I learned quickly that the more you have, the more maintenance it requires so think about what will work best for

you considering the time and energy you have in maintaining your garden.

- **Bad things do happen to good people** and, I believe a garden is where the good can grow. A plaque that I had in Joby's garden says it all: "A Garden is Where a Soul Feels at Home". Also, remember that these gardens offer healing and memory to those who are still alive. If for any reason, your loved ones are away (i.e. soldiers from their families) or the need for you to find therapeutic healing, creating a garden of personal meaning can bring much benefit.

I offer you a Memory Garden pamphlet that may be a great resource for you. This pamphlet contains ideas to get started and a list of plants and their meanings. Please contact me if you wish to have this resource at bhahngreene@gmail.com or visit our website at www.brendahgreene.com.