

Herman Memorial Garden

We can learn a lot from Mother Nature as she reminds us of the cycle of death and rebirth. As the days get longer and the sun becomes more intense, the earth responds by showing us what has survived the cold winter months. Not everything survives; we are always surprised. Another surprise that comes to the gardener is what just pops up. Seeds, carried by the wind and birds, somehow find their way into our garden. These little surprises bring joy as well. So it is with the grief journey, too: letting go of what we need to and embracing the new seeds of life as they come.

Working with our hands and creating a thing of beauty can be therapeutic. Planning our summer garden, shopping for plants, planting them and nurturing them to maturity can be both rewarding and restoring. Gardening can be a means to heal after loss.

Last spring, after the death of her husband, Harlan, LaJean Herman discovered the joy of planting a special garden in his memory. She thought about which perennials would be most appropriate, taking his favorite colors into consideration. To provide a splash of color in the garden, annuals were intentionally planted to remind her – and those who viewed her garden – of his personality. “He always loved red geraniums which I planted by the rock and it turned out to be the most beautiful plant in the garden.”



The garden is still blooming in September.

After everything was planted, the thought came to her to place objects in between plants that reflected her husband’s favorite things. “On the rock I put his name along with a tractor as he loved his tractors. I also placed a forge in the garden where I have planted flowers as antiques were another favorite of his. I also placed a solar light by the rock so it is visible at night.” Family and friends who came to visit during the growing season were moved by the beauty of the garden. Showing the garden to others gave LaJean an opportunity to talk about her husband and the symbolism the garden held.

At this time of year, when we are anxious to get outside and long to be more connected with the earth, it might be a good idea to think about planting something big or small in honor of those you wish to remember in this special way. “I plan to continue with the garden again this year and expand it. I received a gift certificate from my children to purchase a bench, which I

plan to incorporate in the garden.”