

“How to Grow Your Own Money” by Renee Shea

Once upon a time, I dug a hole in front of my house and threw a bunch of bulbs of some kind into the earth. I didn't follow any instructions. I didn't plant the bulbs so many inches apart. I just threw a handful into the earth, covered them and waited to see what would happen.

Although some of my relatives have been great gardeners, I am not. Some people love gardening. I despise it. Perspiring, getting muddy and coming across the occasional disgusting or scary insect that lives beneath my lawn is not my idea of a good time.

However, I love the results: flowers. So, for some reason, which I have forgotten, I had some bulbs and wanted some flowers; so I threw the bulbs into the ground and waited to see what would happen.

Sometime later, little green things with a hint of orange began emerging. One by one they burst open into large, bright orange lilies. They were the most beautiful flowers I had ever seen. The flowers were thick, large, and lush. “Wow,” I thought. “Did I do that?” (No, Renee, God did that, but you go on believing whatever!)

I can't remember how many of the bulbs bloomed in that first summer, but every June they pop up like a reliable pal, and they expand in number each year. At one point, I had 90 orange flowers, all in a big bunch.

Neighbors would come from all over my block to admire them. The lilies bloom right around the first of June and within two or three weeks, they are gone.

Everyone has respected my orange lilies. Nobody tries to pick them. Even the bunnies in the neighborhood, who think my front porch is an all-you-can-eat salad bar placed there just for them, have consumed my potted pansies, hibiscus and impatiens. But they never touch my orange lilies. The rascally rabbits lie beneath my shade tree and stare across the lawn admiring, but never bothering the blooms. They are happy just to look and enjoy.

That's exactly how I feel when residents of The Villa plant flowers, vegetables and herbs around our deck. It not only allows everyone who lives or works here to have something more in life to enjoy, it also makes our community more homelike. There are flowers of every color, tomatoes, onions, basil and more. (By the way, thank you if you are one of our resident gardeners. Your work is very much appreciated.)

Now, why not invite a few friends to join you for lunch or dinner here at The Villa? Later, ask them to join you on our deck to take in our serene surroundings, chuckle at the antics of the animals, and admire all the plantings? It may be just the thing to convince them to join you here permanently.

Plant that seed and watch it pay off abundantly! If they move in, you get \$1,000.00 off your next month's rent. Who says money doesn't grow in gardens?