

## Planting Memories by Beth Turlington

There are any number of things that can trigger memories, a certain scent, picture, location. For me, most them involve the garden.

The smell of Petunias. I am immediately standing on my Grandparents porch in upstate New York. My Grandmothers flower beds on the right, with the Hollyhocks, Gladiolas, Iris, and the ever present Petunias, all of which grow in my own yard. In front of me is that enormous vegetable garden, my Grandfathers domain, with the very neat, very straight rows, each item in its perfect place. Years later I would figure out his upbringing in the Albany Shaker Colony influenced how that garden was grown and tended. It explained a lot about him too. He'd probably be somewhat dismayed with me and the less than tidy rows I have going on in my garden, but I'm pretty sure he'd be glad to know I have a garden.

The memories of my Mother's parents are with me every time I head out to work in the yard. It's their influence that taught me to love growing things and turned me into a gardener in the first place. I hear their voices, see their faces. I'm holding my Grandmothers hand after we'd pulled carrots, heading to the well to wash the dirt off, and then sitting on the well curb to eat them. Priceless memories planted years ago, still growing right along.

Walking around the yard, there are so many things growing that have been given to me by family and friends, each with a memory attached to it. What I need to do is make a map and write down who passed along what, and if I can remember, when. One of the best parts of gardening is sharing what grows in your garden and getting new things in return. It's really wonderful to look out at all the things blooming away in your yard and seeing the sweet faces of the folks who've shared with you. You're going to smile, you can't help it. You'll find for the most part, when you admire something growing in another person's garden, you will probably walk away with some of it to take home and how much fun is that!

My husband and I have 4 grandchildren, all of whom have trailed along with me, working in the flowerbeds and garden from the time they were big enough to sit up by themselves and I only waited that long with three of them, because they were born in the winter. I'm passing on what my Grandparents taught me and hopefully planting a few memories while I'm at it, so that someday down the road, no matter where they are, when they smell Petunias, they will be standing on Grandma and Papa's front porch in Wichita Falls, smiling.