

# Grandma's Flower Garden

by Mackenzie Krauter

The morning light pours through my east-facing window as I clutch the quilt up around my chin. The burnt orange and floral quilt squares drape my body in warmth. My five year old self wriggles free from the blanket and I turn to get up out of bed. It's another spring day. Stumbling out to the main living space in my cotton nightgown, I rub my eyes awake. I walk to the glass french doors that lead out onto the freshly painted deck. My grandmother is already hard at work in the garden on this early Saturday morning.

Visor gracing her head, her white blonde hair poking around the visor's edges, she kneels in the dirt. Shovel and trowel in hand, she removes unwanted green weeds and dandelions from the bed. She tosses them into a white five gallon bucket, stained with dirt. She turns and smiles at me, her pink cheeks flushed from the physical exertion and the morning sun.

Fresh cut grass and meticulously placed bricks line the flower bed. A blanket of dirt speckled with vibrant colors. Yellow, white, and peach daffodils, little faces greeting me. White, pink, and purple tulips are bobbing their big heads. The side yard holds so much promise of what the season will bring. Garden roses are budding. Bearded Irises are poking their green bodies through the dirt. Soon their purple petals will unfold to reveal their yellow fuzzy caterpillar centers. Colombine, with their delicate crowns, are the flowers that I am allowed to pick whenever I want to.

Magnolia trees and Dogwood trees are in full bloom. Like a bridal procession, they scatter the ground with their petals. The wisteria is climbing up the lattice. Soon their clusters of airy purple blossoms will begin to cascade down in an arch. The strawberry patch in the lower lawn has fresh green leaves coming up. Some white buds are beginning to open with the promise of those ripe red fruits arriving in summer. My Grandma's garden is Eden, it is my paradise.

Gardening requires work and faith. The careful placement of seeds and bulbs. Regular weeding and watering. Protecting plants from harsh elements, pests and predators. And once the work is done its time to wait. Trusting the potential of a tiny seed. Embracing the process. Sacrificing the desire for instant gratification. We can't boss nature around.

All this work and faith to what end? Beauty. But not for something that will last forever, fleeting beauty. Flowers grow and then they wither. If you're like my grandmother you know that beauty is worth the work. Grandma didn't view gardening as a chore. She saw it as an investment in beauty. Gardening builds character. When we get our hands dirty to cultivate beauty it creates an inner beauty within that is lasting.

Lounging on the couch with my phone I can get lost in the infinite scroll. All this beauty is accessible at the tap of my finger. The images never cease, but there's never enough. My desire for beauty isn't found on a screen. I lie and tell myself that I do this for creative inspiration. What I long for isn't found on a Pinterest board or someone's curated Instagram feed. I find it when I look in the eyes of my children. When I scrub my living room floors and turn up the music. When I pick up a paint brush and struggle with a blank canvas.

In contrast to always craving more, my grandma taught me by example how to slow down and appreciate life. She showed me with her garden how to see the world through a lens of beauty. I am grateful that I have been raised to prioritize beauty in my life. Investing in beauty is worth the work.



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# Banana Bread

2 cups	flour
1 tsp	baking soda
3	ripe bananas
½ cup	olive oil
1	egg
1 tsp	vanilla bean paste
¼ cup	sour cream
½ tsp	salt
½ cup	sugar
½ cup	semi-sweet chocolate chips

## Instructions:

- 1) Preheat the oven to 325 degrees
- 2) Spray a loaf pan with oil or line with parchment
- 3) Mash the bananas in a mixing bowl
- 4) Add the olive oil, sour cream and sugar to the bananas and mix until combined
- 5) Add the egg and the vanilla bean paste to the mixture and mix until combined
- 6) Add the flour, baking soda and salt to the mixture and mix until combined
- 7) Fold in the chocolate chips
- 8) Bake 60-70 minutes



Ingredients:

4	ears of corn
¼	red onion
½	anaheim pepper
¼ cup	cilantro
5oz	crumbled queso fresco
2	limes
1 ½ tsp	himalayan pink salt
¼ tsp	black pepper

Instructions:

- 1) Slice the corn off of the cob and add to a bowl
- 2) Finely chop the red onion, anaheim pepper and cilantro and add them to the bowl with the corn
- 3) Add the queso fresco
- 4) Add the juice of two limes
- 5) Add salt and pepper and mix everything together
- 6) Serve with tortilla chips or as a topping for tacos

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# FRESH CORN SALSA

## AND GUACAMOLE

Ingredients:

2	avocados
1	garlic clove
½ tsp	himalayan pink salt
¼ tsp	black pepper

Instructions:

- 1) Mash the avocados in a bowl until smooth
- 2) Press garlic through a garlic press and add to the bowl
- 3) Add salt and pepper
- 4) Mix together and serve with chips or as a topping for tacos