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لها في سنة 67

من سنة 67

في سنة 67

ب. ل. ه. م. ن. ج. ك. ل. ع.

ز. ح. ط. ي. ق. ف. ر. و. ز.

د. ر. و. ع. ح. ط. ي. ق. ف. ر. و. ز.

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Impatient Gardener

I recently started the task of reclaiming a piece of overgrown garden. It had been beautifully landscaped and planted with choice specimens many years ago, but the shrubs had been allowed to spread, lean and ramble, larger plants had smothered the smaller ones, of which only tiny scraps remained, and grass and invasive plants were everywhere. It seemed necessary to strip it out entirely, but a compromise plan was reached where the good clumps would remain and everything else would go. Despite this perfectly reasonable plan, impatience to see it all tidy and finished began to creep in. The large well-anchored stumps and romping weeds added their voices to the general air of intimidation. But I am happy to say that I have had such encounters before and I deafened my ears to their assertions that they were staying put and could not be shifted without a mechanical digger, a flame-thrower or a crowd of body-builder friends armed with axes and crowbars.

I remembered my own little gardening adage, that has seen me through many an arduous task without the necessity for unusual muscle-power, namely that as long as I can snip and saw the plants faster than they can grow, I will win every time - and over time. The doomed plants did not like to hear this, but cheers of support from the good plants, about to be released from their overcrowded existence, helped me to strengthen my resolve with the spade and pruning saw. My other weapon is to imagine that the ground was already clear, and ask myself whether I would put these sorry-looking plants in if they were not already there. The answer is always a definite no, they would not even be considered for a single minute. This always resolves the question for me, and overcomes any hesitation about ripping them out.

If you have ever watched a film where the hero is despatching his enemies in hand-to-hand fighting, you will notice that they appear in an almost endless stream, from different directions, but most conveniently one at a time, thanks to the script writers who ensure that he not only wins but that he does not have to share his victory with lesser players in the story. Spreading out the encounters is a good example to follow in the gardening battles. My plan was to isolate a single job, a single troublesome stump or clump, or one small area, and put every effort into dealing decisively with it. This means that at the end of the day there is something to show for the hard work, with a clear patch and the pile of prunings mounting up in a corner. Thoughts of impatience are held back once again and the next day starts with the encouraging view of yesterday's victory over the chaos.

The benefit of having to do it in stages is that ideas change as the scene clears, and plans for replanting are revised and improved. This quote made me smile - "The best time to plant a tree is ten years ago" - although with this current task, it is the weeds that have taken this advice and have aggressively ensconced themselves in all the best spots years ago. There is nothing better a gardener likes to do than to set all the lovely plants in their new homes and look forward to seeing them flourish, but there is also nothing worse than failing to prepare the ground and seeing things come up from fragments that should have been removed more thoroughly. From experience, I can now hear these little pieces of plant material talking - "I am going to sit here under the soil, and when you water and feed, I will use it to grow back up, and I will send my biggest roots straight under that huge rock where you can't dig them out!" This brave talk does not last long and the hapless fragments soon join their fellows on the pile.

Impatient Gardener

The worst is now out of the way and the more pleasant parts are next, with the final mature result already being enjoyed in imagination. With just a little more patience, these mental pictures will become reality, and the overgrown mess will be just a memory. Any garden here will revert to tangled oak woodland, if allowed to have its own way. Expensive nursery plants can wear out their welcome, becoming woody and leggy, and crowding out their neighbours, or sometimes just providing too many places amongst their stems and roots for weeds to tuck themselves into. Comparing before and after photos will be an occasional indulgence but the most gratifying result is seeing what can be done with a logical plan and simple, continuous, piecemeal progress, and not with brute strength or expensive professional help and equipment.

I hope you are getting on well with your own cultivation endeavours, planting tiny seeds in the shape of dots, dashes, circles and lines, both straight and curved. They will grow up into miniature words, expand into phrases and sentences, and eventually cover entire passages, all in the shade of a giant blossoming Shorthand Tree. You have

faithfully watered them with your time and attention, and rigorously weeded out the faulty, shaky and unreliable marks before they gain a foothold. Old bits of stringy invasive longhand have been removed and maybe relocated elsewhere for occasional decorative use. Fortunately you do not need to wait for time and seasons to pass, as gardeners have to, before enjoying the delicious fruits of success. The final agreeable, pleasant and useful outcome will exactly match the effort that has been put in, rather than the even passage of time since the venture was started.

Unlike fruits and flowers in the garden, you can keep the results forever, as they will never fade, get lost, damaged, broken or disappear, and, as long as cultivation and development continue, they will grow bigger and better as time passes. However, regular weeding and trimming to shape will be necessary to reach and maintain maximum efficiency. Compared to the initial effort, this is a sedate and pleasant job, definitely not a hardship if done regularly and willingly, and well worth doing in order to preserve what you have worked so hard to achieve so far. (1049 words)