This page was exported from - Shelburne Free Press
Export date: Sat Oct 31 21:39:27 2026 / +0000 GMT

Christian Perspectives: joy in your garden

The seasons come and the seasons go, both in our environment and in our life. Over these past two seasons of summer and spring, I have chronicled through pictures the flowers, shrubs, bushes, birds, and wildlife in our garden. Some of the garden areas were newly designed last fall and some just this spring. Nevertheless, we enjoyed their beauty during their early beginnings. On Facebook I have shared, through words of encouragement and thought provoking comments accompanying the pictures, at least a little of the joy I take from my always changing gardens.

As with a garden, life is always changing, with each season bringing its special joys and experiences. Autumn will soon arrive with its spectacular displays of colour and bountiful harvests brought about because of the warmth and the rains of the spring and summer. Having moved in late June 2014 this was our first full spring and summer season in our current home.

We had so many unexpected displays of different flowers that we had not known were here. The Johnny-Jump-Ups literally jumped up one day, as did a host of other beautiful flowers in turn. And, yes, as in life, some weeds sprang forth too, but we did not let them steal our joy.

In fact, some of the weeds ended up being spectacularly beautiful. It is all in how you look at them and the lessons you take from them.

Regardless of your circumstances, experiencing joy and peace in your heart is a decision you make. No one else can give or take them away.

Sometimes people get so caught up in the seemingly negative experiences that they forget to stop and smell the roses, to enjoy the daisies, and to remember that just as God cares for the lilies of the field and the birds of the air, He cares for us ? His creation whom He loves. We need to look for life lessons and a garden is a great place to look for examples.

Soon we will bid adieu to the hummingbirds who have been such fun to watch. Rather than be sad, I choose to think of the joy we had while they were here. Do you know why humming birds hum? They don't know the words! So, even when you don't know the words, or no words of joy seem to be in your heart, you can still hum. Before you know it, the joy and the words will come. The fact is, we do not sing because we are happy. We are happy because we sing ? or hum!

One day we found a tiny baby rabbit in the fenced area where our cats and dogs play. Picking him up to move him to a safer place, I marvelled at how soft, tiny, cute and trusting he was as he nestled against my chest for about 15 minutes. More importantly, I relaxed and enjoyed those moments taken out of my busy schedule. Think about what God has put into the garden of your life that have fostered moments of joy...and relaxation...and peace...and calm...and...There, admit it, that felt great! Watch for and savour those precious moments.

It is a wonderful feeling to know that others find joy and peace in our garden. A pretty green frog enjoys floating on an artificial water lily we placed for him in the waterfall feature. Actually, we have at least four or five frogs and several toads who call our garden home. We plan areas throughout our gardens to specifically accommodate the needs of God's creatures such as frogs, toads, hummingbirds, birds, butterflies. Our welcome sign is out. Is yours?

No matter what season of life you find yourself in, whom are you inviting into the garden of your life to share your joy and peace?

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