

Living Well in the Shadow of Life

How big are your zucchini?

NO ONE WILL REMEMBER THE PROJECT YEARS DOWN THE ROAD. THEY WILL ONLY REMEMBER THE FUN YOU HAD IN THE PROCESS.



Years ago, there was a cook who wrote the *I Hate to Cook* cookbook. Since all of us have to eat, it was for those who don't like to cook but have to do it. If I wrote a book, it would be entitled, *I hate to tend gardens – a guide for tending your father's garden*.

I grew up in an era where my father had the first ever above ground pool. For twelve years, we set up the pool, filled it up and had a great time until the day that the wall broke, the liner broke, and our pool emptied in three minutes. My parents were done with having a pool. My dad wanted a garden.

For twelve years, the weight of the water pressed down on the dirt. The ground was rock hard. My father was too “fiscally conservative” to rent a rototiller. Instead he had me and a pitch fork. He put the pitch fork in my hand and told me to dig, but the ground was so hard you could stand on the pitch fork, and it wasn't entering the dirt. I tried to “cheat” and do shallow digs with the pitch fork. My father wouldn't have anything to do with that. He wanted me to dig the full depth of the pitch fork into the ground. I spent weekends turning over that dirt.

We would visit my cousin who had a horse. You know what horses produce. Instead of playing with

my cousins, I was shoveling horse manure into buckets that we put into the trunk of our car. I had the joy of spreading the manure into the garden. Our neighbors loved us. They kept asking us if we got a horse. We informed them that we had something better – a garden. Finally, I had the job of planting seeds. From that point forward, I was done with the garden. If those seeds were to take root, it would require divine intervention.

This went on for years. When I was a college student, my parents went away for a week without me. They left me in charge of the garden. I was to water it each day, being sure I covered the entire garden with water. I also had to be sure I picked the zucchini before they got too big.

As soon as my father's car was out of sight, I rigged up my own watering system. In our backyard, we had an “umbrella clothesline”. I turned the sprayer on and connected the hose to the clothesline. Since it spun in place, I would come out of the house every 15 minutes and adjust the position of the clothesline. You didn't think I was going to stand there for an hour and water the garden, did you?

It worked wonderfully. The garden was wet; the

vegetables grew, and my father would be proud of me, except for one thing...I forgot to pick the zucchini. The day before he returned, I ventured into the garden to see how big they were. They were the size of baseball bats. I could have handed one of those zucchini to a little leaguer, and he could have hit a home run with it.

Expecting to get in big trouble, instead, my father was impressed that his garden grew monster zucchini. He showed off that zucchini. I dodged a bullet. I never told him about my watering system. I felt like Matthew Broderick in the movie *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*.

Stop taking yourself so seriously. Whether you're remodeling your house or redoing your landscaping, be sure to have fun in the process. No one will remember the project years down the road. They will only remember the fun you had in the process.

Rev. Tony Marciano is the Executive Director of the Charlotte Rescue Mission. The Charlotte Rescue Mission provides a free long term Christian recovery program for men and women who are addicted to drugs and alcohol. For more information, visit our website at www.charlotterescuemission.org.