

# Extraordinary gardener growing for a century

By Ginny Gregory

Charlotte Gantz, 100 years old this July 12th. Officially, the unofficial queen of the garden for the Dirt Gardeners at Weymouth House in Southern Pines. She is a tiny woman who has made her own clothes her whole life. She is the mother of twin boys. She was roommates with Kathryn Hepburn in school. She has written many books. Her latest one was published last year. It was written for young nature lovers about the life of all the creatures and plants in the Sand Hills of North Carolina. But her most important accomplishment has been her love of gardening and small creatures which she has shared over her years at Weymouth.

When I first started speaking at Weymouth at the annual Dirt Gardeners Workshop I was introduced to her right away. She wanted to walk the grounds with me and just share the pleasure of it all. She came at gardening sideways. She was not really a gardener of gardens but more of vegetables with her parents. She found herself slipping into gardening as her interest for all plants pulled her into flowers and herbs.

I was working at Fearington Village at the time. We talked about her desire to start an herb garden. Over many visits I brought herbs I loved and she collected the ones she loved. All of the Dirt Gardener volunteers made that herb garden happen in such a beautiful manner. It is right off

the kitchen in the back sited the way all herb gardens should be so they are available for easy use when cooking.

She is not a designer, repetition in the garden kind of gardener. She is a... what do we have and what do I like at Big Bloomers and where can we put it... kind of gardener. What will the birds like, what will the hummers like; do the bunnies like this plant? This is Charlotte. She has taught me about what is really important. Her love of nature is so deeply profound that it translates into her love for this whole precious world and everyone living on earth.

She is aware of the time she has spent on this planet. She is facing mortality with no regrets. She has taught everyone around her that this

is the moment... this moment we are in right now. Seize the day and all of that kind of stuff, but to her it is not just stuff. It is life.

Charlotte believes in the sunshine of each day, of each situation, of each person. She sees life simply as a challenge. She has lived fully. She has touched so many hearts. Charlotte attracts love and beauty because her heart is always open. Her hearing may be going and her legs may have betrayed her spirit, but her heart is always open to the sheer beauty of the

moment.

I give her praise and thanks on this very day... at this very moment. I am a better gardener because of her. Her amazing intellect that sees the depth of life (the everyday life and the

garden life) is the core of her soul. I am a better person having had her love and friendship over the years. Thank you Charlotte Gantz.

Keep your eyes open. Breathe all of the smells. Touch all of the coarse and soft around you. Let all of the pain and joy be a part of your experience and keep wondering... what bird is singing in the garden? In the most unexpected places your mentor for life is right next to you... just turn around. Seize the moment.

Ginny Gregory is owner and creative energy behind "Beyond the Pail... Creating Gardens and Beyond." She is starting "Beyond The Crate... Finding Simplicity Out of Chaos," an organizing, de-cluttering, down sizing business. For more information, please check [www.beyondthepail.net](http://www.beyondthepail.net)



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