

Children's summer eve playing part of nature's rhythm

Lifted into the noise of the night, I feel the sounds through my pores. As I lean quietly over the deck rail to hear a young owl learning to hoot, my childhood washes over me. I spent so much time outside in my younger years. Like a semi wild posse, we kids played games until darkness called us home to eat cold suppers — as we were often late to get inside while it was still hot.

The sounds of summer were the musical backdrop to all of our activities. We'd play Red Rover, Red Light Stop and Freeze Tag. Hide and Seek was always the last game of the night. One of us was the hold out left as the night set into place. I was a very anxious hide and seeker. I was just sure I would be the one left. I think I finally grew into calming myself by listening to the night sounds and watching the twilight take over.

The frogs would start up, often "catty didds" would roar; hummers would buzz by in their last flights of the night. I would see the occasional bunny sprinting into shrubs for shelter and the dogs of the neighborhood would start their nighttime conversation. I soon would see the lightin' bugs starting to become the warning sign of being the last come tagged or the one left hiding as others had gone in for supper. It was then that I began to notice the magnificent flight of the bats. Erratically they would zip and swoop in the starry sky low enough to catch their form but high enough to feel out of harms way. They had an eerie quality, as I knew that birds were tucked in for the night taking a snooze. These winged creatures were out waltzing in the evening sky. Of course by now the mosquitoes were eating me alive. Knowing that the bats were great mosquito eaters, I always felt a bit irritated that they very not more vigilant workers. Mosquitoes, chiggers and poison ivy were (and still are) the hallmarks of summer in kid years.

Scratching was the way we all lulled ourselves to sleep at night along with the hum of the ceiling fan and the night sounds thru the open windows. My grandmother used to have an attic fan. When I slept over and she

In the Garden

by Ginny Gregory



kicked that fan on I mean to tell you I was in heaven. It was my first introduction to a primitive form of air conditioning. With all windows of the house open, that fan made the entire house hum. To this day I

am never very happy without a ceiling fan on and buzzing. We keep the AC warm and the fans throughout the house whirling. Even the dogs hunker down under them to get relief from the summer heat and sleep.

You know, all of my memories are around gardens in some way. Without them there would be no where to hide, the hummers would have nothing to sip, the birds would have nowhere to sleep, the bunnies would have nowhere to munch sweet treats and baby owls would not be hooting causing the sounds of dogs to flow into the background noises of the frogs in concert.

Gardens enhance, enrich and empower us daily. The fragrances bind us to our past and encourage us to be in the present. The textures enrich our vision of the world at large and our labors in the garden offer rewards over and over again reminding us that there is an exquisite pattern in nature. One we do not have to invent. It is in place and we can just jump in anytime and add to the quilt making. We each add squares as we garden, sit in the wealth of what the garden offers, entice children to catch the lightin' bugs and then release them. My grandson had a great summer camp

(many weeks — all different subject matter each week). One week it was "Critters in the Woods". He made critters in art form, came to love and know a lot about millipedes and centipedes, but most of all he came to know and love the tiniest parts of nature. He is learning about nature in different ways than I did and yet he is coming to the same conclusion..."It is pretty great, GG. Every thing has a job, knows what to do and looks really special." You are right; we all have our job in nature, not just the insects.

I am so grateful for all nature gives me. The fall flowers are now beginning to show off, fall

crops are in and starting to become real plants, cucumbers are doing a last flush and pickles are being made for the winter months ahead. I remember it all when I lean over the deck rail drinking in nature. Like my puppies I am sniffing in the garden smells and soaking in the night sounds... baby owls learning to hoot. Who ever heard of such a wonderful experience? Nature... takes a deep look around you.

Ginny Gregory is a regular contributor to Chatham County Line. She is the owner and creative energy behind Beyond The Pail... Creating Gardens and Beyond www.beyondthepail.net.



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