

Collateral beauty

By [David Williams](#)

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I'd never planned on growing flowers.

Oh, I think flower gardens are a lovely way to spend one's time. They add a little beauty to our world, and make for a wonderful visiting place for our beleaguered pollinators. I can see the delight in that.

But that's not my goal, as I plant. My garden, insofar as I put time into it, is all about the delight of producing even a fractional amount of our household food. My enjoyment comes from the taste and flavor of those things that rise from the earth, from the beans and strawberries and blueberries, from the tomatoes and potatoes and squash. That I am in some small way nourishing my body with those simple labors has a nourishing effect on my soul.

So I did not set out to have flowers, to have beauty for the sake of beauty, though I appreciate it.

But of course, I do have flowers. You have to, if there is to be fruit. There are so many.

I'd expected the little white strawberry flowers that dappled our patches, and the tiny, delicate ivory blossoms on the bush beans.

I knew, in the back of my mind, that tomatoes came from little yellow caps that dangle down from their vines like the headgear of some anime elf-maiden.

But I did not anticipate the lovely white and purple of the potatoes. And newbie that I am, I had no idea that squash would be such a riot of immense, yellow-orange trumpets, male and female both.

So there's my garden, turned to the simple, unassuming labor of producing good things. And in the midst of that labor, almost as an afterthought, it is filled with splashes of color and loveliness.

There are lives like that, too, human beings who are intent on giving and producing simple goodness. And even though they aren't intentionally setting out to be beautiful, they are.

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