

## *The Little Gardener*



“If you garden with children” was a phrase that caught my eye in a recent Horticulture Magazine. I discovered a new book, “The Little Gardener” written by Julie A. Cerny. The goal of this book is to help children with the natural world. The author states “that through gardening, young people discover that their own hands can affect their well-being, the well-being of others, and, accomplished with intention and care, the well-being of natural systems. They come to know their own ability to engage with ecosystems, steward life, and change the world.”

The review of Cerny’s book in the Horticulture magazine includes: “Author Julie Cerny is an educator who teaches children the ins and outs of gardening, along with respect for the natural world and the place that gardens take within it. In this book, she clearly lays out how to design, plant and tend a garden with a child (of any age). She offers activities and examples that are infinitely helpful in guiding the young gardener – because it’s one thing to know how to garden, but a different thing entirely to try to explain the processes to a child.”

Cerny provides a guide for becoming the Little Gardener’s guide in the garden. Be patient and flexible. Make your enthusiasm visible. Wear time loosely. Be positive and uplifting and let your sense of humor shine through. Ask one question at a time and be specific. Express gratitude for the garden and what you receive from it. Cultivate curiosity. Welcome mistakes.

As I read through the author’s introductions, I was excited to find that Cerny believes that a Garden Journal will become your steadfast companion as you and your little gardener grow alongside your garden. Each chapter has journal prompts for you to consider as you garden, but I must admit I jumped to the end of the book to read her Final Journal Prompts.

What has your 2020 garden year been like? Have you made a diagram of your vegetable garden so you can rotate your crops to help avoid disease and pests? Is there a specific garden that needs your attention in 2021? Make those notes not before you forget!

As your 2020 garden season draws to an end, consider some of Cerny’s journal prompts that include:

1. What has been your favorite part(s) of having a garden?
2. How has designing, creating, planting, caretaking, and harvesting a garden changed you? How has it helped you?
3. Describe how your relationship with your garden has changed or affected your relationship with nature as a whole.
4. What are your best memories from the process of bringing your garden to life?
5. How has your relationship with your backyard changed over time?

### **If you could go back in time-**

1. Would you design the layout and structures of your garden any differently?
2. Would you plan the “what, when, how much, and where” any differently?
3. Would you change how you constructed your beds?

**Get that Garden Journal out and get it updated for 2020 so you can start planning for 2021!**