

# Stopping to Smell the Roses (or Sweet Peas)

by Donna Sievers

**“S**pring drew on...and a greenness grew over those brown beds, which, freshening daily, suggested the thought that Hope traversed them at night, and left each morning brighter traces of her steps.”

~Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*

As spring turns to summer, I wanted to reflect a bit on the passing season. There are so many beautiful quotes about spring that I could not easily pick one. Just like flowers, it's hard to determine which one brings you the most joy. I love them all, and this year's flower display was one of our best.

When you plant a seed, a seedling, or a larger plant, you do so with hope that the flower, tree, vegetable, or herb will grow strong, be healthy, and prosper. Sounds a bit like life in general, doesn't it? Growing plants has always brought me joy and happiness, and I am sure that this is what keeps me coming back to the garden, whether it be to weed, water, prune, fertilize, or transplant. I sometimes forget to just sit and enjoy the fragrance, the beauty, the birds, and the butterflies. Sounds just like life again...we're often too busy to enjoy the simplest and most beautiful gifts around us.

I always make my husband pick which flower he likes the best when I can't begin to answer that question myself. Roses and sweet peas always top my list, but then the wisteria wants to jump ahead when it blooms its beautiful purple or white blossoms. When that butterfly landed on the amaryllis, it became my favorite. Again, perhaps another life lesson...you don't have to have a most favorite; just enjoy and love those around you.

My neighbor, Mia, who is seven, has always enjoyed gardening with me. One of Mia's favorite flowers are sweet peas and I asked her why. Mia said, "Because they come in so many pretty colors." Mia also said that her mother has a story book that tells of the life of a snow drop or daffodil. Eventually, the flower got pressed into a book Mia loved. She said, "Fairies love these flowers."

My parents named me Donna Rose over 70 years ago. I don't know if they realized they were giving me a life-long hobby, but I love that they did. I feel so fortunate to have a garden to play in and will happily share sweet pea seeds when we see each other at the Bluff Heights 4th of July Block Party on Vista Street

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Donna Sievers is a Board Member of the Los Angeles Area Helicopter Noise Coalition (LAAHNC). She was raised in Long Beach and taught at Stanford Junior High, Bolsa Grande High, Pacifica High, and CSULB before leaving the classroom for administrator duties in Garden Grove USD. She and her husband live in Bluff Heights, where their retirement activities include volunteering for the Joyful Child Foundation in Memory of Samantha Runnion, gardening at the Bembridge House, bike riding, walking to the ocean, and maintaining a 107-year-old house and garden.

