

# Garden Experiences



In the 30-plus years that I've been gardening I've learned a lot about what I can handle and what I can't. For instance, I quit planting vegetables and fruits decades ago. Seems odd for a food writer, doesn't it?

But here's the story. Early on I planted strawberries. They surrounded my little pond and looked beautiful. I looked forward each day to being able to pick the riper ones. I planned to do it when I got home from work. Well, "somebody" beat me to it, day after day, after day.

I'd drive in my driveway and look up in the tree. There was a big, fat squirrel looking back at me, his face stuffed with strawberries; the same strawberries I had planned to pick. As I waved my fist at him, he'd pop each individual strawberry out of this mouth, hold it in his little paws and munch on it. If squirrels could laugh...

The bunnies ate my lettuce.

The deer ate everything else.

I know, I was supposed to plant one of those gardens surrounded by fencing to keep the critters out of my veggies and fruits. But I was too focused on the aesthetic of my garden and I

thought the fencing would look unsightly. I stopped planting fruit and veggies and decided to focus on my flowers, bushes and herbs. That worked for me.

Now I live in the big city. My first apartment had a deck on the 5th floor rooftop. I had to learn how to plant an elevated garden that could handle the breezes you get in Chicago up that high. At first I thought I had to plant sturdy plants. That didn't work. Plants with large leaves would just whip in the wind and the leaves would get all crispy from flapping around. I had to learn to keep things low and more delicate. Seems counter-intuitive, but my garden thrived much better that way. I just had to make sure it got enough water. At 5 stories up, things really dry out fast.

In just a couple of days I'll be planting my garden. Now I have a deck on the fourth floor. It's protected by high walls, so I don't have to worry about wind. I'm going through the process of planning my garden right now. I'll update you later on what I decide to do, but I know I'm going to have a lot of herbs.

What are your favorite things to plant?

Do you plant veggies and fruits successfully?

Leave me a message in the comments section at the bottom of this article (below the recipe and related posts). Let's get a conversation going and share some stories.

Cheers,