

For the love of gardening

By ELIZABETH STEWART
Staff writer

By all accounts DeLoris Heppard, 85, is a "gardening Grandma".

"The rocking chair is not for me," says the pert and versatile homemaker who belies her age.

Family and friends never find Grandma in her rocking chair. They find her in her backyard garden which in spite of the hot weather is blooming profusely.

She does have a swing in a shady spot in her garden where she likes to sit. Her daughters find her at times taking a "little break" but most times she is tending the garden and, they say, with lots of love as it is her pride and joy. Chris (Mrs. Grady) Howard, Jr. says her Mom is the perfect hostess and likes to serve iced tea in the garden to family and friends.

Daughter Dorothy Samson said Mrs. Heppard's love of gardening is her legacy.

"Sometimes I like to think of our mother as the Mamie de Jardinage, or the Gardening Grandma. If I could name one person who eats, sleeps and lives for her flowers, it would be our Mamie de Jardinage!"

Said Samson, "Some women hand down old family recipes. Some bequeath family quilts. Others may pass on wonderful family photos. And still more entrust to the younger genera-

tion, old family stories. But our mother has done even more than this. She has bestowed on her family the love of gardening. This passion for gardening has not only inspired her daughters, but has extended into some of her grandchildren and even great-grandchildren.

"We've seen the way she appreciates the aspect of having a flower garden. She not only loves to gather flowers for her table, but is actually fond of weeding, pruning and snipping. She certainly receives pleasure and gratification with gardening, but she also realizes that she can look forward to lots of hard work. It means time spent preparing her porch plants for the winter—hauling all of them in her garage-appointed greenhouse and then carefully placing them under her grow lights in preparation for the daylight's waning.

"Once she puts her charges 'to bed' for the winter, she looks forward to receiving the much anticipated seed catalogs, soon to be stuffed in her mail box. This won't happen though for a few months, so that is something she awaits with hope mixed with impatience. But once these catalogs come, they keep coming and she keeps reading and dreaming—dreaming of what those exotic seeds will produce.

"Our mother has always enjoyed propagating plants. She uses slips, cuttings,

leaves or anything she can get her hands on. Her work gives birth to many different kinds of plants—and we receive the benefits.

"Her garage-appointed greenhouse also functions as a plant hospital. There is an area dedicated to those little plants that are struggling to live. Her dedication to these "green" patients gives way to some healthy growth, at

which point, they are eventually potted up and ready to be released to the outdoors.

"Our mother, DeLoris Heppard, has inspired, influenced and instilled in us the appreciation, admiration

and understanding of what it is to have a garden. We have a special recipe that our mother has given us (we love her potato salad.) And we've always had fun looking at old family photos that have been handed down. But the best legacy that she could

ever give us would be to possess 'l'amour de jardinage' - the love of gardening."



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Thanks to Bayada Nurses, Dora and Clayton Singleton, 92, are able to remain in the comfort of their own home. They are pictured here with their Bayada Nurses home health aide Linda Gail Hamrick

Diane Singleton feels so blessed to still have her parents in her life, however, making sure they have the care they need can be quite a challenge.

"Mom and dad are both 92," said Singleton. "Even with mom's Alzheimer's disease and dad's poor vision, they insist they don't want to go in a nursing

home. They want to stay in their home, where they are comfortable and everything is familiar."

Singleton knew she couldn't care for her parents alone. She researched home care companies and chose Bayada Nurses because of their flexibility.

"We have a home health aide who gets mom out of bed, bathed and dressed, and makes breakfast for her. In the evening, another aide gets mom ready for bed. It makes life so much easier for me," said Singleton.

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