

## Kiss My Aster

8/29/2025

### And Just Like That

*Amanda Thomsen*



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And just like that, I have lunches scheduled with my friends again, after not seeing pretty much anyone since February. Did I wear cute shoes to work the other day? And a vintage dress? Yes, I did! I also left work an hour early, two days in a row, to go to parties! I worked in my own yard for two uninterrupted, destructive bloodsport hours.

Is this a seasonal thing due to cooler temperatures or am I nearing a burnout episode that I'm trying to chase away? The off-season is converging on me like a laurel crown of achievement and it feels different this year. Like I've earned it? Which is ridiculous because we all always deserve to feel good about coming out of the other side of a busy period in one piece.

Have I trained my friends to leave me alone for months and not invite me out until the season is over? Is that embarrassing and I should be ashamed to admit it or is it just the way things are? Can my friends tell from the way I talk, the way I communicate online or if my eye is twitching? How much of their lives have I missed out on while completely tweaking out over a fountain order? Or a mini arboretum install? It's time to socialize again and to be a good friend again.

I feel like there's more at stake for me this year or maybe it's less. More money, more problems—am I right or what? My momentum is stronger, is it going to feel weird to slow down? We're still going hard, but it somehow feels like the expectations are more chill. It's been a very long, hot summer for all of us, customers included. I still have five estimates, a rendering and a whole lot of plants to take care of RIGHT NOW.

Is it me? Am I learning to balance, getting super good at my job or is the wheel of the year doing it for me? It seems like it's coming out of nowhere, but of course that's not true. I've learned so much about my own burnout, its causes and fundamentals this year. All of my decades-old unmet needs are each having their moment on the other side of a two-way mirror in a police lineup, scrutinized to identify which is the root of what core issue so that I no longer pass them on to my family, employees or customers. This allows me more time to be a fun lil' stinker while not being "The Problem." It's giving me freedom and defragging my personal hard drive. There's some peace in it.

Another part of it is that autumn customers have totally different vibes. They make spring customers look like caffeinated puppies or something like that. These people get it or are just grateful to be making it in under the deadline. I had a customer write to me "I know I only loosely understand what's happening and that makes it really fun" regarding her install. I've decided that customers that get nuance are my favorite people.

The summer was disgustingly hot and now that I'm not repulsed by the idea of food, I sleep through the night without being drenched in sweat, I'm not chronically dehydrated and can wear cute clothing/accessories, I have more joie de vivre to spare. That unrelenting heat was breaking my soul.

If I put it all in a blender and shake it out into a glass—I think it's the fact that it's coming to an end makes it more bearable. Or more frightening? Either way I'm going to be getting a boozy brunch out of it for the first time in months.

**GP**

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*Amanda Thomsen is a funky, punky garden writer and author with her own store, Aster Gardens in Lemont, Illinois. Her store info is at [KissMyAster.com](https://kissmyaster.com), and you can follow her on Facebook, Twitter, Threads AND Instagram @KissMyAster.*