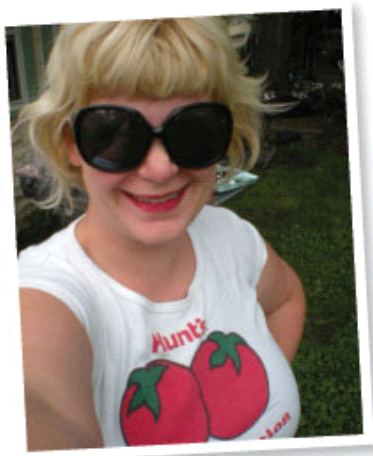


Columns

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If at First You Don't Succeed, Google It

Amanda Thomsen



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A friend of mine posted on Facebook that she was “so done” with gardening after hitting a few minor setbacks in her yard. I know she wasn’t thinking about me when she posted it and wasn’t looking for a pep talk, but I hear this so often and it totally spikes my blood pressure. It’s creating deep frown lines in my brow.

What if I was like, “I broke a glass unloading the dishwasher once in 2017 and two plates in 2016 so I’m giving up washing dishes ... and drinking all beverages that aren’t served in a coconut or hollowed out pineapple.” It just doesn’t work that way, sadly, because I could really use the Mai Tais and the break from washing dishes. That might help those frown lines.

There are only a few pastimes that people attempt and give up on because they aren’t naturally perfect at it right away; I’m betting gardening is No. 1.

Here are things I say to fill a failing gardener’s sails when they’re about to give up:

“Gardening is so easy; some of the best gardeners I know are squirrels.”

“How do you feel about AstroTurf and silk lilies?”

“You can grow that; I have it coming up in the cracks in my driveway.”

“Water is not love.”

“What if your great-grandparents were like ‘farming is haaaaard. We are SO DONE’? Would you be here right now?”

“Is there any possibility AT ALL that you’re overthinking this?”

“Do you regularly give up on things?”

“Try not micromanaging this; Mother Nature is in charge.”

“Do you want some cheese with that whine?”

“Winners never quit and quitters never grow their own massive heirloom tomatoes.”

“Let’s try succulents!”

“Have you excelled at everything else you’ve ever dabbled in up until this point?”

“Four year olds grow marigolds in Dixie cups—you’re telling me you can’t?”

“Uh, is something else bothering you? It’s just petunias.”

I was so upset by my friend’s Facebook post that I simmered like a crock pot on high for a few hours, trying to figure out a way to best explain why she was being ridiculous. I came up with this: I really love popcorn and I want popcorn in my life, however, I always, ALWAYS burned it when I’d make it on the stovetop. So did I just give up on popcorn altogether, including store-bought popcorn? No. That would be ridiculous because that would include Chicago Mix, right? Again with the frown lines. I Googled up how to make popcorn and read about what I could be doing wrong, I checked product reviews on various popcorn makers and I tried several different methods of making it. Now I can make popcorn like Orville Redenbacher (when he was alive, I’m going to say, not a zombie Orville Redenbacher). Isn’t that how life works? If at first you don’t succeed, Google it, do some reading and then try, try again.

How can we pull failed gardeners back into the fold? How do we reach the unreachable? How can we make things easier for those who’ve lost their confidence? Let’s discuss, over some popcorn. **GP**

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