

# My Mother's Garden

*The story of a perennial garden where friendship blossomed*



In 2008, Audrey Peham scheduled a consultation with Minnehaha Falls Landscaping Owner Russ Henry as a Mother's Day gift to her mother, Veronica Peham. "Ronnie" was turning 89 and was dreaming of a beautiful garden in her Highland Park backyard that would also be fruitful to feed the birds. The goal of planting a garden was clear, but Ronnie and Audrey had no idea of the blessing it would become.

Growing up on a South Dakota farm in the 1930's, the drought of The Great Depression left an unforgotten impact on Ronnie. "Mom always told me gardens wouldn't grow during the depression," Audrey recalls. "Growing up, we always had flower gardens with marigolds, petunias, hollyhocks, and nasturtiums, and mom was happy when the flowers flourished. She viewed lush and colorful gardens as abundant and luxurious, and her new garden would become all of that, and more."

Minnehaha Falls Landscaping planted fruit bearing plants with dangling berries, including verbena and Solomon's seals. Audrey recalls, "It wasn't your average garden that starts with small plants and mulch. The plants were tall and beautiful from the beginning, and they filled the area." Soon after the garden was finished, the birds came, and so did the neighbors.

## Veronica's garden brings joy

"The garden was near the alley and neighbors stopped to admire it," Audrey explains. "Mom was so proud and would say 'I have the best garden in the neighborhood,' but the wonderful thing is it became a source of socialization for her."

Despite her advanced age, Ronnie watered her garden and kept it looking beautiful, and she cursed the rabbits whenever they nibbled on something. Audrey chuckles as she recalls witnessing it. "It was a wonderful thing for my mother to have the garden, and it became more than just a source of beauty for her."

Ronnie found joy in her garden for four years, prior to her passing at age 93. Before Audrey and her family sold the house to someone outside the family, Audrey removed some of the ginger and Solomon's seals and planted them in her own yard, in remembrance. When the plants come to life in the spring, they remind her of how much the garden meant to her mother. "The garden brought my mother great pleasure and pride because it was beautiful, but my family had no idea that it would draw social support for her. I'm so glad I worked with her to make it happen."

**"The wonderful thing is it became a source of socialization for my mom."**

– Audrey Peham

