

# Good Neighbor or Good Fence?

*Tell Me What You Think . . .*

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by Annie Plowman

Good gardeners are good neighbors. Well... we should be. Parents are always looking for that teachable moment. I happen to believe that there are many teachable moments in the Garden. There's that saying that "Good fences, make good neighbors". Often times that's true but, there are so many simple things we can do so that maybe our neighbors feel less of a need for that good fence.

Here's one example. I have had one next door neighbor for over twelve years. On their property, there is a hedge that divides our property the length of my driveway. They have always made a point to trim the side of the hedge on my property. I've never asked or expected them to do that. They don't have to do this but, in thoughtfulness, they do. That has always made an impression on me. It's not so much the work, it's the gesture.

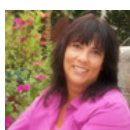
Sometimes those thoughtful gestures go a long way toward making a better place for us all to live. We don't need to sort through who are deserving and who are not deserving of a kind gesture because we often just don't have all the information to be making those kinds of judgments.

Here are some things we all can do in our little green patch and beyond to make our neighborhood a better place. Please share some of your ideas. This is the season of giving!

- 1) Be mindful of the leaf litter you create and what your tree drops. Clean it up quickly. Be mindful of the limbs of the trees that extend from your property over the neighbors fence (perhaps dropping litter into their swimming pool or koi pond). If a tree looks hazardous, have someone come check it out.
- 2) Fix (or have fixed) broken sprinklers that are causing flooding issues. I have often had customers come into the nursery trying to fix ongoing problems in their garden that are a result of flooding from a neighbor's property. They are frustrated because they can't fix it. You could at best be causing a nuisance and wasting water and at worse be killing off someone's plants and trees, costing them a pretty penny.
- 3) When cleaning your front street gutter, why not go that extra 50 feet and clean your neighbor's too. If they ask you, "why?" you can just say, "I wanted to do something nice for you."
- 4) Pick up that dog poop. Maybe you have decided you can keep you windows closed or not use the backyard but, many people want to enjoy the night breeze through their window or sit on their back patio. Keep that poop cleaned up. You might even enjoy your yard more!
- 5) While we are working on the things we can do better, we don't want to be the neighbor that jumps everyone else's case. They didn't get the trash cans put away last night? Maybe the leaves didn't get raked this week? Well.. okay... People get sick, are losing jobs, have dying family members and sometimes just had a really bad day. Think twice and then again before stirring up strife. Personally, I don't want to be the one people want to build a fence around.

You have so much to share with the world and teach your children. Plants those seeds and watch it grow! Don't miss these teachable moments.

Happy Planting!



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