



WHEN A CITY GIRL *goes country*

By Annette Bridges

Mamma's Lillies

I am guessing many of us own some cherished keepsakes that originally belonged to our parents or grandparents. My most treasured gifts are the ones that bloom each year. Every time I enjoy some shade from our many pecan and mulberry trees, I am reminded of my mother-in-law telling me she planted all of them. I can only imagine when they were saplings and wonder how many years it took for them to become the huge and robust beauties they are today.

When my husband's grandmother moved into a nursing facility closer to our ranch many years ago, my husband and I were tasked with selling her house and belongings she no longer wanted or needed. I didn't know back then how much I would love her day lilies my husband transplanted that now welcome those who enter our ranch during their blooming season.

My mamma passed away a couple of years ago and moved out of her home another couple of years before that. Again, we were tasked with selling a house and the possessions left behind, and yet again, my husband transplanted some flowers.

Mamma had a huge stand of mesmerizing yellow lilies. He placed these stunning charmers in a special spot near our vegetable garden by what was once upon a time known as the "egg house."

It's been sad these past two years adjusting to life without Mamma. My husband referred to himself as an orphan after he



(Left) Mamma's lilies. (Right) Day lilies at the gate. (Photos courtesy Annette Bridges)

lost his parents, and I didn't fully understand what he meant until I lost mine. I never imagined gazing upon Mamma's alluring lilies would lift my spirits during my long season of grief.

Their blossoms don't sprout until all of our other spring flowers have withered away. I've often shared lessons I learned from the 60 years I was blessed to spend with my mamma.

At her memorial, I shared how she saved some of her greatest lessons for the last few months we spent together. I never imagined her dazzling yellow lilies could change my perception of life in a

profound way.

It doesn't matter to her lilies if they are surrounded by gloomy wilted and dried up flowers. Seeing her lilies' proud beautiful blooms in a garden patch of decay and decline caught my attention this year more than in the past. 2020 has evolved into a year filled with immense ugliness, sickness, death, fear, uncertainty, riots, protests, killings, injustice, impatience, depression, loss, lack, intolerance, unkindness, and extremism of every kind.

The crazy thing amidst all of this ugly is I feel like I am discovering what's truly important

and pleasing to me; what matters most and what doesn't. Now, I am pondering the how and why of it all.

It seems a testament to the old adage about how a little light dispels a lot of darkness. It reminds me, too, of the Biblical parable of the tares and the wheat that grow side by side and only in the harvest can we easily recognize what's good.

Somehow being in the midst of so much ugliness is making what's gratifying, satisfying and delightful more visible, and I'm quite simply feeling thankful for newfound clarity. ☺

