

Growing a Protest in the Garden

BY JONN KARSEBOOM

By the time any one reads this I imagine it will have been old news. Perhaps even: long forgotten.

But for the record, I was recently a protester in a protest march just after the presidential inauguration. It was actually deemed "The Women's March" but from my suburban garden perspective "protest" seemed a much more exciting description.

It wasn't easy.

I initially joked about attending some sort of protest only as a tease against my older brother who on a bet, guessed correctly the weirdly, otherworldly presidential race.

Besides, I had plenty of work to do. My garden was no longer covered in a sleepy clean layer of white snow but was now brown and messy and fallen branches were scattered throughout as if some wild giant had shook each individual tree clean.

"What good will that do?" my brother asked incredulously. "Protests are for cry babies and snowflakes and folks who aren't working." He smiled. He knew that I knew he took the words verbatim from several conservative talk shows.

I find it amazing that when it comes to politics my brother and I come from two different corners. But much like in a garden, I suppose, some plants grow quite differently given even the same conditions. Despite the differences politically, we get along amazingly well. We can disagree most vehemently but in the end we're still quite literally, brothers.

I had to admit though he made an unintended point.

I didn't want to protest "the man" no matter how untraditional he was. Over the years my garden has taught me too much pragmatism. I wanted to move forward.



Photo taken by KATU News.

Strangely, the simple decision of choosing what to say on a poster board proved to be the unexpected struggle.

I had lots to say.

Therein lies the problem. It's entirely too easy to play the critic. What exactly did I believe? What among the many issues was the most important to me? And, more specifically how do I say that in a short-attention-span-protester-poster?

I felt like a gardener, looking over a 2 foot by 3-foot pot (my poster size) and deciding which is my favorite plant combination.

Often times when attempting anything new I've noticed that my biggest temptation to quit comes at my first hurdle. If it takes too long to overcome it becomes dangerously close to being replaced by something like eating. I must have been missing a few good opportunities as of late. I'm currently a good 20 pounds too heavy.

Turns out I went through with my protest anyways. After many attempts my theme was Star Wars. (Again otherworldly) With an unauthorized photo of Yoda (in his garden on Dagobah) my poster read, "Ruin my garden, Climate Change will."

When my march finished I unpacked the oversized sign from my borrowed Honda and leaned it against our coffee bar in the nursery. It sits there now in the same position as I left it. The sign looks a bit more forlorn now.

It will take much more effort and much more work to keep it's intended spirit alive. I'm unsure which way to go next. Should I spread the word? Write my legislator? Lead by example?

Somehow I'm determined this good cause to continue. Much like a tender young plant in spring, I'd like to see it grow upwards and onwards.



Jonn Karsseboom is determined to lose 20 pounds "over the next several years" by capitalizing on as many opportunities as he can handle. Write to him: jonn@thegardencorner.com.