

Garden Spotlight

Gardening Together for Over 60 Years!

Tom and Linda Lee grew up one block away from each other in North Lawrence, Kansas in the late 50's. Linda comes from a family of ten so she learned about gardening from a young age while her parents grew plenty of food to take care of such a large family. In fact, Linda stated that "everyone had a garden" in North Lawrence in those days.



Linda's mom canned every vegetable they grew and stored them in the cellar. Her dad grew potatoes and when it came time to dig, all of the children helped, including their young neighbor, Tom. That's how things worked in those days; gardeners and farmers helped each other when work needed to be done. Linda remembers her dad volunteering her and her siblings to other growers during harvest time.



Linda admits to being a nuisance to Tom during their elementary school days while he ran around with her brother. Perhaps it was the hours spent in the garden that helped Tom and Linda develop a bond. Tom and Linda eventually married and to this day live in Lawrence. Presently, they tend a 50-foot by 50-foot, in-ground garden where they grow vegetables, sunflowers, irises and other flowers to attract the bees.

Their favorite part of gardening is sharing the vegetables with neighbors, church family and their McDonald's coffee buddies. Some years, the produce they share goes farther than others. This year, they were pleasantly surprised when they pulled a 13-pound sweet potato out of the ground! At 18 inches long and 12 inches in circumference, Tom and Linda wondered if they may have some kind of record. Linda credits their giant sweet potato to the exceptional soil in North Lawrence.



Although their sweet potato isn't quite large enough to break records (81 pounds is the world record sweet potato!) it is definitely a fun reward from their gardening efforts and another memory they have created together. Linda was able to make EIGHT pies out of this one sweet potato!

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Tom and Linda's relationship began as children in the garden. Now they have been married 59 years. They both see the value of growing their own produce and the relationships they have been able to build by being generous with their harvest.

Linda's advice: *"Seek guidance from gardeners. Enjoy gardening and reap the rewards!"*



Thank you, Tom and Linda, for sharing your story with us. Do you know a gardener with a story to tell? We'd love to share their gardening experience through the K-State Hort Newsletter Garden Spotlight. Email hortsupport@ksu.edu to help us grow together.

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