

Weeping Morning Violet Glories

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My mother could charm a dying plant into blooming. Her favorite flowers and plants included the weeping willow tree, morning glories and African violets.

In her home beauty salon were several varieties of African violets. Purple, magenta and blue darlings bloomed almost year-round. The leaves were always admirably deep-green and fuzzy. Like everything in the house that she kept in the best form it could be, the violets were coddled and coaxed in a windowsill full of sun and shadow.

September was the time for morning glories. Our city backyard had a narrow strip of soil along a painted blue fence. Mommie saved seeds from each year's crop of flowers and at the end of summer, she was ready to plant new vines. The year that she broke her elbow while cleaning windows, I had almost complete responsibility for planting and stringing her prized blooms.

Without fail, her care in measuring the depth of the seeds in the freshly tilled soil yielded rapidly creeping vines that instinctively aimed for the top of the 6-foot fence. Thin lines of string from Popsicle sticks guided the vines into patterns until she would spot the first blue from the kitchen window. Day after day would appear her glories in blue, lavender and pink until September waned.

I don't know when she first mentioned the weeping willow. Somewhere, perhaps on a drive, she turned her little nose up to the sun and commented on a pastoral scene. "I do love a weeping willow; it looks like someone crying." She felt more deeply than I suspected.

Each time I think about my mother's love for plants, I can see her among her beauties and admire her again.