



Lenbrook

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Growing Where You're Planted ^[1]

By: Jackie Durant, Lenbrook Resident
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When I moved to Lenbrook in 2013, I had been gardening all my life. I inherited my mother's love for creating beauty and grew flowers and plants wherever I lived throughout Great Britain – Bristol, Scotland, and later the Cotswolds - and then I brought my passion to Atlanta, where my husband and I and our two sons moved in 1986, supposedly just for three years. I loved our house in Druid Hills with its generous 1.5-acre garden where I expanded my gardening skills to

adapt to Georgia's hot weather and red clay, and I also built a mountain garden at our home at Lake Burton.

After my husband passed, I decided to remain in Atlanta and learned about Lenbrook from a friend who had already moved here.

Living here is actually quite liberating. I love the lock-and-leave lifestyle, I enjoy my independence, and I enjoy my new friends. Also, it's comforting to know that should something happen, you're not by yourself. I think that's the best gift you can give your kids: now they don't need to worry about you.

As a gardener, I was drawn to Lenbrook's courtyard, and was inspired by the opportunities. I eyed this barren space that used to be an old putting green. Nobody used it anymore, but I had some ideas about what we could do with this and other areas. When I suggested starting a Garden Club, Lenbrook's leadership team, which is very good about facilitating resident-driven clubs and programs, gave me the go-ahead right away.

We started with six members, and one large planter area near the Fitness Center. We were completely responsible for purchasing, installing, and maintaining this area – almost like taking a test! Soon, Lenbrook gave us more pots to do (each pot has a sign listing the names of donors who do all the physical work themselves), and today fully supports all our efforts.

One major feature we created is Lenbrook's herb wall, featuring basil, dill, sage, rosemary, thyme, chives, pineapple sage, mint and more. Lenbrook's chefs have also started growing tomatoes, peppers, and chard. Our chefs use everything we grow, since we don't use pesticides, and our residents love to stop and visit this special section that appeals to all the senses! People here enjoy picking a spray of rosemary and mint for their home, or eating an omelet with fresh herbs from Lenbrook's own garden.

Currently, the Garden Club has grown to fourteen members – and has seeded many new friendships between these passionate gardeners. Since most of the gardening is done in large pots and raised planters, even people with physical limitations get to play in the dirt – and accomplish a lot as a result. We're serious and committed. We have a roster to make sure that all pots and plots are cared for throughout the year, everybody is responsible!

As a resident, and as chair of Lenbrook's House and Grounds Committee, I know there are many benefits to having a beautiful garden. Just think about the effect that being in nature has on your day-to-day life. We live better lives when we are surrounded by natural beauty. Also, by being intentional gardeners, we can help combat the fact that we are losing our bees and build a pollinator garden, and we can focus on the need to use appropriate plants and not just something flashy that looks good for two or three weeks."

I often tell my plants: "Now you grow!" And that is how I see my move to Lenbrook. You have to make the move with the right frame of mind. You have to accept where you are in your life and then create your own possibilities – and grow!

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