

## Down By The Berry Patch

### "The Snowball Bush"

**Julia A. Berg**

October 2007

The year was 1961; son, Steven was three and a half years old. He told us that he would like to have "one of those trees with snow balls on it." He was referring to a snowball bush. It seemed like an easy and nice thing to accommodate. There is so much to be learned from planting a tree and watching it grow.

We were living in a rented farm house on M-25 near Unionville at the time. The tree was purchased and Steve helped plant it in the yard in back of the house. He had to dig a hole, add fertilizer and water, put in the bush, and then watch it grow. When we moved to our new home on Phelps Street in the town of Unionville, the tree was transplanted under the kitchen window. When we moved to Hart Street in Essexville, the tree was transplanted to the back yard of the new home there. When we put the house trailer and deck on the property on Oyster Road near Rose City, the tree needed to be transplanted again. It was put on the front of the deck where it can be seen from the road.



Each spring, the tree gets taller and taller. Originally, it was about Steve's height when it was planted — the height of a three year old. Now Steve is six foot three and the bush is much taller than he is. The blossoms always remind us of Steve when we see them in the spring.

One year, Steve was unable to get north in the spring and was not going to see his snowballs. One of his college students drove up from Lansing to deliver an overdue paper. We took the student's picture in front of the tree so Steve could get a perspective of the height. I am sure the student thought we must be a loco family.

This snowball bush was only the beginning of Steve's interest in landscaping. When he lived in our guest house in Rose City for four years when he was teaching at Kirtland Community College, he landscaped around the house. He landscaped along the creek at Michriste; he cut railroad ties to build steps to the creek and then landscaped the banks with wild flowers and herbs.

He purchased a wonderful home on Thorny Brae Road in Farmington Hills and has the most beautiful yard in the subdivision. He has hundreds of kinds of plants — herbs, annuals, perennials, ground covers,

---

Reprinted from *Down by the Berry Patch*

<http://berrypatch.info/judy/003.html>

Last updated on 25 July 2014

Photo Caption: The snowball bush in Rose City, Michigan.

and some things others may call weeds such as thistles that attract the birds. The perennials provide an ever changing landscape each season of each year. He has added water gardens and a small gently flowing stream. Of course, there are many bushes and even a small orchard of pears, apples, peaches, and more. Scattered among the flowers during the year, you will find many vegetables that he shares with the neighbors. They particularly look forward to the zucchini and tomatoes.

Yes, Steve's interest and abilities in landscape design just snow balled over the years. He is very gifted and artistic in his designs. The bush moved from place to place with us. Steve moved on without his snowballs, but he does come see them each spring.

I wonder how long this beautiful snowball bush at Michriste will be a part of the landscape? I am sure it is too large to be transplanted again. But it does lend itself to wonderful memories of a wonderful son who is now 49 years old.

---

Reprinted from *Down by the Berry Patch*

<http://berrypatch.info/judy/003.html>

Last updated on 25 July 2014

Photo Caption: The snowball bush in Rose City, Michigan.