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# ALLEN'S LETTER

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**When we are young,** the days until the start of summer seem to creep by like caterpillars slowly making their way up a tree limb. The anticipation of school-free weeks, warm weather, swimming holes, and—perhaps most importantly—the freedom of the season itself, were almost too much excitement for me to bear. I could hardly wait to spend the entire day playing and exploring in my backyard.

As an adult, I have to admit, this sense of frivolity never wanes; I still can't wait to get outdoors. Something about the

long hours of daylight make me eager to enjoy each moment—from the first light hours spent picking summer's bounty to lazy afternoons by the water, and dusk gatherings on my porch. It's as if nature is giving us a few more minutes to take notice of the beauty around us.

That's the reason why we've stocked this issue of *Garden Home Style* with easy-to-recreate ideas for enjoying your own backyard this summer, including fresh recipes, floral arrangements, and even a flower crown, which was a big hit at our annual Garden2Blog conference. If you're ready to explore new territory, you'll also find some of the nation's best venues for hosting an outdoor event along with 10 of my essentials for any outdoor party. As you flip the pages, I hope this issue will inspire you to enjoy every moment of the season.

Cheers,

*Allen Smith*

"Summer afternoon, summer afternoon; to me those have always been the two most beautiful words in the English language."

- Henry James



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