When the days grow longer and the nights get warm, it’s definitely time to spruce up the yard and garden. My grandmother’s green thumb was known throughout her little town. She could grow anything. When the school bell rang in summer break, I would travel two hours south to my grandparents’ home. Soon after my arrival, my grandmother would put on her lipstick (she never went anywhere without it) and load the garden wagon into her baby-blue Cutlass Supreme. We would head to the town nursery. No big-box stores, just a family owned nursery filled with everything that grows in dirt. We would search for just the perfect combination of beauty and durability. My grandparents didn’t have sprinklers, just an oversized green watering can. So, the flowers had to be perfect for the type of soil and light … and they always were. We would plant all day and be covered in what my grandmother always called clean dirt. After our work was done, we would get cleaned up and go over the hill to get home-made ice cream. Lemon custard was my favorite. Such a wonderful memory and, thankfully, a few skills stuck. I try to remember the lipstick as well.

In this issue, we highlight a few of the beautiful gardens in our community as well as the artistry that goes beyond nature, only adding to their bucolic surroundings (page 14). There are so many places within driving distance that showcase the flora of Florida. A picnic is a definite possibility. Soak in the beauty and even get a few tips for your own backyard. It may be hot outside, but there’s always an ice cream store around the corner.

“A garden to walk in and immensity to dream in — what more could he ask? A few flowers at his feet and above him the stars.”
— Victor Hugo, Les Misérables

Summer in the Garden

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