

10-10-2019

Rev. Greetings!

Alex, thank you for your letter. Please know that the pictures and the info that you provided have already given me a plethora of new ideas! I imagine that the garden will look completely different come next year.

I love the new dimensions, and I must tell you, if the sugarcane doesn't work out, I've already conjured up some new concepts.

If you think that that 6x9 cell structure/sculpture is small, the cells here are actually smaller than that (4.5' x 10').

Alex, I think the garden should be about inner beauty (I'll explain this concept later.) The area that I labeled as the patio, or veranda, to me, that is the heart of the garden. The outer row was going to be about sugarcane, and how it relates to slavery, mass incarceration, etc. The inner row, the crops, that's about sustenance (I'll explain this concept later.) Anything of aesthetic beauty, I wanted that to be planted in the heart of the garden.

As a prisoner, I have noticed that people tend to admire from afar... Rarely do they take the time to get to know you, and so, to discover your inner beauty. With the garden, I don't necessarily want people to be able to admire the roses, etc, from afar. If the sugar cane grows, it will act as somewhat of a barrier, and people will need to trek beyond the barriers in order to take in the garden's inner beauty.

As for the heart of the garden, we don't have to use solely roses. I want it to be as dazzling as possible, so nothing's off the table. I definitely like daffodils, I used to pick flower bulbs as a summer job in Washington State, so daffodils bring back memories.

So, for the heart of the garden, I'm just thinking a beautiful, mixed, colorful arrangement, something that exemplifies inner beauty.

As for the trellis, or gate, yes, I am agreeable to jasmine, as opposed to honeysuckle.

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I love the stone entrance, as well as the rectangular design (great ideas!)

I'm looking at the pictures, and I agree that a walkway is not necessary.

As for the edible plants that Trish recommended, I love onions, and garlic. I've never had rhubarb, but that sounds like something that may have found its way into a slave's diet, so let's try it.

Earlier I spoke of sustenance. We know that slaves were provided the worst foods, inedible, inferior, etc. Slaves were sometimes fed worse than the pets, and live stock. Well, prisoners don't fare much better... When it comes to sustenance, prisoners aren't afforded many healthy food choices.

Not only are there few healthy food choices, but the prison industrial complex is set up, and designed to make money. That means that the state feeds you as little as possible, and they basically force you to buy your own food in order to sustain yourself. The food items that sell are typically high priced, and unhealthy.

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So, in terms of sustenance, or the inner row of crops, at some point I would like for it to reflect what I just discussed.

In closing, I loved the pictures, and yes, I would love a group pic of the whole team ☺

Question, I am curious to know if daisys, and thistle grow in that region? I have a concept for them.

Oh, what about greens? I know that beans and greens were a large staple of the slave diet. In fact, they were often forced to eat the stalks, stems, etc, of various greens and vegetables, and when it came to live stock, they were forced to eat the ears, tongues, snouts, hooves, etc. They called this, "making something out of nothing." That term is still used by black folks til this day, especially prisoners.

Closing for now.

My Solidarity,
Jim Young
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