

**May 18, 2007**

## **Me and My Beet**

Yup, that photo of me and my beet is about to circulate across South Africa as the mug shot for the new columnist of a South African gardening magazine! The basic idea of the column is I write about all the things I mess up while figuring out how to plant flowers and plants in my new South African yard. Trust me, I have plenty of stories to tell. My garden is currently a tangle of dead squash plants (I planted them even though my wise old lady friends said the frost would kill them, which it did).

Life is funny,  
hey? (South  
Africans love to  
end sentences  
with “hey?”  
Phoebe picked it  
up before the rest  
of us, but it’s  
contagious. It  
does sound nicer  
than “huh?” or  
“doncha think?”)

Seriously, God  
works things out  
sometimes just to  
tease us I think.

This year started  
with Adam getting on a big kick of sending articles to adventure motorcycling magazines. And the responses? One acceptance after another. He’s had photos and stories of him and his little red Honda published all over this country and the U.S. Read some on the link of “our writing.” Really, they’re pretty cool.

I meanwhile, was stewing in jealousy. I’d just finished a long correspondence course called “Breaking into Print,” and swore I should be the one getting stuff published.

Well, I had a big talking to from God about my bitterness and prideful motivation for writing in the first place. And I decided to hunker down and accept my husband’s writing gifts (and the fact, which he also admits, that motorcycling magazines aren’t always dealing with the most talented writing pool). And I also decided to just push on writing the stuff I felt like writing.

So one day a month ago Adam and I were looking at a magazine and he said, “Why don’t you write a column about being a gringo in South Africa and trying to figure out how to garden?” He told me to call up an editor, I did it, I wrote up an article, and boom, they



liked the idea. About the same time an American missions magazine wrote back to a very old query letter to say they wanted to publish an article I wrote, too. When it rains it pours.

As I often like to do, though, I'm finding this whole experience full of metaphor for the Christian walk. As I wrote in our last newsletter, our microfinance work feels so much like starting a garden right now. I would add that trying to get things published felt the same way to me—I have a whole folder of rejected articles. But then just when you're humbled enough to accept that God's in control, something sprouts.

The Bible is so “choc-a-block” (my new favorite British term for “very, very full”) of analogies about gardening. We plant, we wait, we see lots of seeds fail, we see God water and shine on the plants, and we see a harvest that's miraculously blessedly big. Just wish I could remember that back in the dry seasons.