

A VIOLA VOLUNTEER

Emma Davis had a small rectangular area out front along her driveway that she always kept filled with flowers. With fall coming on, she purchased a trunk load of garden mums to plant in her spot. With an ample supply to pick from at the home improvement store, she came home with yellow, gold, white, purple, and maroon to create a color mass.

Several weeks passed and Emma's mums were filling in nicely. One morning, while weeding the mum bed, she noticed a purple flower on a small weed beneath a mum. She reached down to pull the weed and stopped. For that little weed she was about to pull quickly became recognizable as a little viola. It had been almost a year since she had any violas in the bed, yet there one was. A dainty volunteer soon to be overpowered by mums; a timid little plant fighting for life; a plant out of place and not part of the master plan; a little seedling hoping its one little flower would bring rescue.

What could Emma do, but gently dig it up and plant it in a clay pot by her back porch. The little plant responded to its freedom by completely filling the pot to overflowing. Proving most unique,

the one little seedling produced an abundance of flowers with nary a one the same color or pattern. As a lonely volunteer, perhaps the little viola just felt it had something to prove. Emma felt a great deal of satisfaction every morning as she walked onto her back porch. In fact, the viola's entrance into the world motivated Emma to change the way she planted her flower bed. She decided to always keep it a random mix of flowers. That way, if another volunteer sprouted, it could always just bloom where it planted itself.

Something else changed in Emma's life. One morning as she watered the orchids on her back porch, she looked at her viola and sat down. Life is strange sometimes—why some things make us think about or remind us of something else. For Emma, the lone viola reminded her of her own life growing up as an orphan. The very next day she went to the children's home in the neighboring big city. She soon found a home there and felt a great deal of satisfaction with her volunteer work. Perhaps, in some way, she could help one of the kids bloom like her viola.

Of course, one shouldn't always expect such noble revelation when weeding in your garden, though I have found it a good time to think. A man

named Jack Kramer once said, “The word miracle aptly describes a seed.” While I’m not sure the author of that quote had any parallel meaning in mind, it sure seemed to fit in Emma’s case.