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**Planternal Instinct**

By Michael Yanny

It can begin early in life, with that first Horsechestnut  
you pick up and carry around for days on end,  
‘cause.....’cause,  
well, ‘cause, .....it’s neat!

It’s planternal instinct.

It’s what makes you stop in the woods when you see a huge, magnificent tree.  
It makes you look up, walk over to it, put your arms around it,  
and see how big it is.

(not admitting to hugging it)

That’s planternal instinct.

You can notice it every May when the masses begin planting,  
filling their gardens with vegetable and flower futures.

Planting trees for their grandchildren.

(so they say!)

It’s planternal instinct taking hold.

You feel it when you see those little seeds germinating—  
poking their heads out of the soil,  
smiling at you and the sun,  
while you smile back.

Yes, that’s planternal instinct.

It makes you sad when it’s time to thin the beans.

It’s difficult to kill your young ones,  
those that you planted only weeks before.

That’s a tough part of planternal instinct.

Notice it in the autumn, with the coming of the first frosts.

When people bring out the tarps, old curtains, and blankets  
to tuck in their plants for the evening.

They cover their babies so they don’t get cold.

Just like mommy used to do years ago.

Obviously, planternal instinct

It makes some of us very protective,  
    putting cages around our plants to shield them from the animals.  
Others may turn to murder,  
    claiming, “we are only protecting our young from the ravenous predators!”  
This is a moral dilemma brought on by planternal instinct.

You can see it at the farmer’s market on Saturday morning.  
In the proud, bright eyes of the weathered growers  
    as they display their finest,  
        ready to tell you about—  
            all of them---  
                                even after getting up at 4:30 am.

And in the smiles of the consuming city dwellers,  
    hungry to be surrounded by vegetation,  
        in any form.  
And to take some home to nurture them.  
Planternal instinct.

It can make nursery professionals go bankrupt,  
causing growers to produce thousands of plants  
    that they love and think everyone should.  
Only everyone doesn’t.  
Planternal instinct can be blinding.

It makes us build greenhouses and conservatories,  
    Giant monuments to plants.

It inspires some to paint magnificent works of art—  
--Monet, Van Gogh, grandma—mixing plant, paint, and soul.

Planternal instinct.

It leads us to our roots,  
    in the soil,  
        on the limb,  
            from the sun.

Planternal instinct.....it shines!!!