

Garden Reflections

by Larry Johnson, Pharm.D.



Dr. Larry Johnson is a senior pharmacist at Hoag Hospital in Newport Beach, California. He completed his Doctor of Pharmacy degree at the University of Southern California and a residency at St. Mary's Medical

Center in Long Beach, CA. Since completing his training in 1979, he has worked as a pharmacist in various roles at Hoag Hospital.

There is a small garden in the back of our house. OK, I do not have the greenest thumb, but from time-to-time, I can be found tending it and enjoying the beautiful flowers and lush greenery. There is one particular plant that is commonly known as a “powder puff” (*Calliandra haematocephala*), because of the particular look of the puff bloom to the flower. The variety in our yard has bright reddish-pink blossoms glistening with nectar. All the birds seem to love this plant and get nourishment from its seeds and sweet, sugar-rich liquid.

Several times when I have been out back cleaning up the yard, I've noticed a hummingbird, that seemed annoyed

with my presence. I think it is known as an Anna's Hummingbird (*Calypte anna*). Apparently, he thought of me as an intruder into “his” garden and I was keeping him from enjoying his shrub. Now, he may have just been hungry, after all they do have a high metabolism. But the audacity of that tiny bird! He would dive bomb me, yes even strafe me apparently to drive me out of “his” garden. Doesn't he even know that the garden exists because I planted it, I water and fertilize it?

We are the ones who supply the sugar water in a colorful feeding vase so when the powder puff plant is not blooming he will still have some nourishment. However, he does not understand that we are there to help him because we love to have him in our yard. If only I could communicate with him directly to let him know that we aren't there to take away from him “his portion of the garden,” but rather to enjoy it with him.

The Bible says that God created the heavens and the earth. He wanted fellowship so He created a garden and placed man in it. But man rebelled

against God. So prophets were sent, priests were ordained, Levitical laws and commandments were given to bring people into fellowship once again with God who was pleading “... then they shall be My people, and I will be their God.” Jeremiah 32:38 (KJV) Throughout the ages though, man has continued down his own path through the garden not recognizing and giving honor to the great Gardener. However, in God's eternal plan, He miraculously, with often unappreciated love, made Himself a sacrifice for sin for us all – and to those who request, He restores a right relationship with Him.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son (Jesus), that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.” John 3:16 (NASB)

Do not try to drive God out of your life, but instead

“... Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.” James 4:8 (NASB) ✠