Gardening can be a chore. It can be something that requires constant attention, especially in the heat of summer.

I took the weekly, three-month Master Gardener course in February of 2007. I have kept up my educational or service hours to maintain membership in this Transylvania organization.

I was very active in this group for the first several years using my skills as a marketing and networking person and learning “oh so very much” about the climate and the soil of Transylvania County. In addition, I met men and women who shared my quest for knowledge. What a great organization this is for newcomers and gardening “wannabees!”

I am in a different phase of my life now. There is less time for gardening and more time for other things, but I find my soul still connecting with the Master Gardeners.

When I moved here in 2001, the county was known as a subtropical rainforest: An area that got over 60 inches of water a year. OK, I said, I’ll expect it to be like my Hawaiian or Florida vacations yielding a bit of rain every day.

Then things changed, in the mid-2000s, it became a more like tropical rain forest (minus the extreme high temperatures). Rain barrels were all the rage and rain gardens were the “latest and the greatest.” The rainfall exceeded all expectations. I said “no” to the rain barrel because I was a new widow. It was one more obligation, something else to which I would have to attend.

Then we began two years of what the drought National Weather Service called “exceptional drought.” All that excess water was gone.

Plus, I had deer! Those beautiful creatures would eat my hostas, and even my holly. When they were hungry they would eat anything. Should I spray? No, I didn’t want to do that. My philosophy is that I live with Mother Nature, and I must adapt to her.

What to do? I started container gardening, growing things on my deck so that the deer would not devour my young new growth. Gardening on my deck to that I could water daily. It seemed like a good idea. But -yikes- if I forgot to water just one day, the soil became dry, the blooms that were so vibrant wilted overnight.

Gardening is just like life. It must be attended to. It must be part of your routine. If it takes a back seat, the changing climate of this area will take its toll. But – just like life, you can make different choices. When life changes, different choices must be made. It’s a constant learning curve.

To me that means that I did not make the “wrong” choice when I put my plants in the ground. I did not make the wrong choice when I started my container gardening. I simply made the best choice at that time. Now it’s time for something else.
Life is like a garden. It is meant to be nurtured, and then meant to be altered when necessary, just like the Master Gardeners have done with the Silvermont gardens over the years.

Think about joining this great group of people whose gardening styles ebb and flow with the whims of Mother Nature in Transylvania County. A new class starts in early February. Call the Extension office today -- 884-3109 --and sign up. You won’t regret it!

Do you have a question for the Master Gardeners or a subject you would like to see addressed in this column? Send your questions to the Transylvania Times or e-mail us c/o manymoons@citcom.net