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The Inspirer

by Lora Keddie

Little did Kym Pokorny know that years of hard work in her family's nursery business, keeping stride with her five brothers and one little sister, would plant the seed that would grow much later into her love of garden writing.

At a young age, Kym can remember being impressed that her older brothers could carry four nursery cans in each hand. "We would load the trucks and my brothers could load them so much faster. They could carry eight cans in one trip. I wanted to be able to do that." What many of us couldn't do now as an adult, Kym was able to accomplish by the age of eight. But that's Kym; and



in her writing today you can see this same desire for not just reporting or getting the job done, but wanting to produce the best, most informative stories that excite us as gardeners.

Those of us lucky enough to live in the Northwest have the opportunity to read Kym Pokorny daily on her [Oregon Live Garden Blog](#), or weekly in the Thursday Homes and Gardens section of the Oregonian. Her followers are not just drawn in because her articles are educational, or that she knows everything about the latest and greatest plants available, they follow Kym because she writes them like she's telling a story.

She once wrote about houseplant care, entitled "Houseplant Homicide". The title alone captured your attention. The article contained a brief history she had with her own houseplants and the struggles that pursued. Anyone could have related to the guilt of throwing out plants you once loved and later abused with neglect or poor care. Whether or not you own a houseplant you felt you had been there. You had the need to clean out the old and start again.

This gift for weaving history, people, and sometimes a life lesson, in with her horticultural lesson might have started when she got one of her first gigs as a reporter for the Coos Bay "World Paper". Kym remembers, "I did it all. I would cover the school board meetings and then write for the gossip column." It was during this time too that Kym had to cover a death penalty trial. "It's an amazing amount of information you get to hear covering a trial. Most of which the public never gets to hear." Kym was inspired by the layer of stories behind the main story.

When asked what she would write if she couldn't write about plants, gardens, and the people who grow them, Kym cringes, "I hope that time never comes. I just love what I do so much." After a few moments, she relents



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and says that Food writing would be next in line. Kym actually started out as a food writer for the Oregonian. She said that while she worked in Coos Bay, she'd come to the big city of Portland. She said "I pined for Portland." She had never lived in a city and loved sitting in the Park Blocks to watch people come in and out of the Portland Building. Just like she willed herself to carry eight nursery cans at once, she willed herself an opportunity to work for the largest publication in Oregon and a chance to live in the big city.

Eventually the Oregonian started the Homes and Gardens publication, and asked Kym to move from Food to Gardening. With the stars aligned, Kym's love of the gardening world inspires readers every week. She covers plants like she is still covering a trial, telling the story behind the story. You can see this in the article Kym wrote about a 100 year old Gingko tree that was being removed to build a new development. She goes on to tell how one woman was heart sick about the loss of this tree that made her smile every day on her way to work. This woman happened to work for another construction company and asked them if they would help her at least keep the large trunk of the tree. The company agreed and brought the base of the trunk and its large roots over to the construction lot. She had the tree covered in plastic and waited for an opportunity to have it carved or created into another piece of art so it could live on. Quite a while later she went back to check on the tree and uncovered the plastic to find the trunk, even though on concrete had sprouted new young branches. She couldn't believe that tree was still alive. Later she had gone to dinner with some friends and had talked about the tree. A gentleman at this party mentioned that Reed College was proud of their large collection of trees, and that maybe they could find a home. She immediately called the school. After coming out to see the tree, Reed proceeded to make arrangements to transfer and plant it on campus.

These are the stories, not articles that Kym Pokorny writes; the stories and articles that not only educate us as gardeners, but inspire us as people.