



Susan Farmer, left, credits gardening for her healthy outlook. Hydrangeas grow along the fence in her backyard, where veggies also mix with bright marigolds, above.

Hope Blooms

Susan Farmer was searching for an emotional boost in 2007, after breast cancer surgery turned her world gray. She found it through Hope in Bloom (hopeinbloom.org), a nonprofit organization that plants gardens free of charge at the homes of breast cancer patients throughout Massachusetts.

Susan is still overcome with gratitude as she recalls the day when Hope in Bloom founder Roberta Hershon and 15 volunteers showed up with truckloads of hydrangeas, climbing roses, peonies, daylilies, and annuals.

“To have something to look forward to is really helpful for a person who is sick,” Susan says. “You think, *If I plant this now, next year, it will bloom.* Even as I say it now, I feel a burden lifted. I was going through a dark time in my life. The garden made me feel alive.”