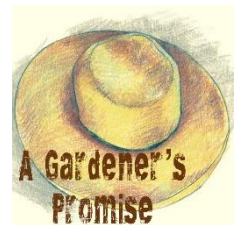


Watering & Papyrus and Hyssop

©[Shelley S. Cramm](#) posted to: [A Gardener's Promise](#) @ www.gardeninDelight.com on March 16, 2023

Women at the well, parched deserts, well-watered gardens, and many more references to water in the landscape overflow in God's Word, all stirring a gardener's heart and connecting us to God's care for the land—and for us. Chapters 7 and 8 of *My Father is the Gardener* highlight such Scriptures with decorated pages of watering cans and wellies, what fun! Water loving and water savvy plants like papyrus and hyssop deepen layers of metaphor and sweeten treasures of hidden horticultural insight. Enjoy journal questions and planting tips below to accompany your reading of this new book.

Watering follows the progression of [planning](#), [prepping](#), and [planting](#) a garden, ensuring our plants are settled and satiated in a moist, hospitable soil-home. Water is as elemental to a plant's life as our own, and the metaphors are in multitude in Scripture, paralleling our physical need for water alongside a spiritual need to be consistently quenched and refreshed. Caring for a garden brings an intimate understanding of this important spiritual reality, and papyrus and hyssop are two precisely chosen plants of the Bible for watering knowledge, representing two extremes.



Chapters 7 and 8 – Watering & Papyrus and Hyssop

While they have drastically different watering preferences and placement in a garden, papyrus and hyssop are both easy to grow and easy to find from online growers. They are special ambassadors, I think, from the Holy Land and the ancient stories of the Bible to our gardens and our hearts today. From flood to trickle, we will be washed in the ways of the Lord. Have your watering can handy!

Papyrus and Hyssop



Papyrus is a fun, funky water plant, thriving at reservoir's edge, along slow-moving riverbanks, or beside garden fishponds. Its towering, fresh green stems spring from a rhizome base that loves to be submerged, or at least constantly wet. Leaves in needlish, grass-like form splay from the top of stem-

stalks, dotted with pale brown inflorescence. Paper-making began with papyrus, by slicing the long stalks into strips, making perpendicular layers and pressing them together in a special process. *Cyperus papyrus* is the Egyptian species, and several cultivars are available commercially today – try [Proven Winners Graceful Grasses® collection](#). For more information see the Plant Guide: [Papyrus – Garden In Delight](#)



Hyssop grows low and fragrant, a gentle green perennial herb in zones 7 to 9. From the mint family, *Origanum syriacum* resembles oregano with a similar scent. This plant thrives in full sun and scant watering once established. Late spring, its snowflake-white flowers attract bees and bring movement to the garden. Hyssop is one of my favorites from the Bible and decorates the banner photo for every Garden in Delight blog! I found my original 4” transplant at [Mountain Valley Growers](#), and it has propagated many times over. See the

Plant Guide for more information, including a link to the many essays written about this holy plant [Hyssop – Garden In Delight](#)

Journal Questions Chapter 7

Follow along in Chapter 7 of [My Father is the Gardener](#)

Can papyrus grow tall where there is no marsh? Can reeds thrive without water? While still growing and uncut, they wither more quickly than grass. Such is the destiny of all who forget God; so perishes the hope of the godless. Job 8:11–12 NIV

- Job's horticultural picture is cut and dry (pun intended): no water, papyrus dies; no God, hope dies. Do you agree? Have you placed hope in something besides God, only to have it wither or dry up entirely?
- Moses was raised up to lead the enslaved Israelites out of Egypt to the land promised to their ancestors. Write in your own words what prophecy the papyrus, a water plant, revealed in the life of Moses.



But, wanting so much to be right about this, they overlook the fact that it was by God's Word that long ago there were heavens, and there was land which arose out of water and existed between the waters.

2 Peter 3:5 CJB

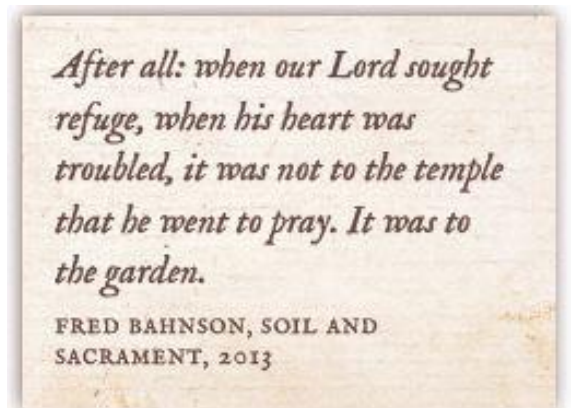
- Do you have any situations in your life filled with tension? Considering the importance of water tension through hydrogen bonding in the earth's geography, weather, and life as we know it, how do you think God might be using your tension in a good, elemental way?
- Write Colossians 1:17 in your own handwriting:
- What do you need Christ to hold together for you right now?

If anyone is thirsty, let him keep coming to me and drinking!
Whoever puts his trust in me, as Scripture says, rivers of living water will flow from his inmost being! John 7:37-38 CJB

- Think of a time when you felt refreshed by God and buoyant within, despite everything around you being in difficult or “dry” circumstances:
- Write Isaiah 55:1 in your own handwriting:
- Isn't it elegant to read Jesus' revelation about trusting in Him for rivers of living water (John 7:38, John 4:13-14), along with the Words of prophets Isaiah (Isaiah 58:11) and Jeremiah (Jeremiah 2:13, 17:13). Write a praise for how Jesus brings these Words together:

For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. Revelation 7:17 KJV

- Write Revelation 7:17 in your own handwriting:
- Has this Scripture held a gentle hope for you during a time of grieving?
- What thoughts come to you when reading about Jesus' weeping at the death of Lazarus?
- Imagine Jesus stroking your cheek to brush away tears. Can you receive His gentleness? His kindness? His mercy?

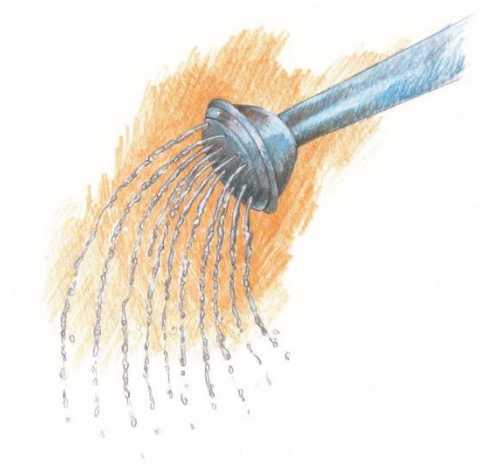


This what the Lord says, the one who made you, formed you from the womb, and who will help you: “Don’t be afraid, Jacob my servant, and Jeshurun, whom I have chosen. For I’ll pour water upon thirsty ground and streams on parched land. So will I pour my Spirit upon your offspring, and my blessing upon your descendants.

Isaiah 44:2–3 ISV

- Do you use a watering can to water plants?
- Write about a situation that feels draining to you:
- Now picture a giant watering can from heaven pouring out living water to restore the situation to its right moisture balance. Write a praise to God from what you have visualized:
- Release this refreshment to your children – to all your descendants – in prayer:
- Praise God for His perfectly-sized watering can. Hallelujah!

After this, I will pour out my Spirit on all kinds of people. Joel 2:28 NCV



Journal Questions Chapter 8

Follow along in Chapter 8 of *My Father is the Gardener*

Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. Psalm 51:7–9 NIV

- Read Exodus 12:21, Leviticus 14:6-7, Psalm 51:7, John 19:29, Hebrews 9:19-22 and write your impressions about the instances of humility surrounding the hyssop plant in these Scriptures. Linger and let the Lord’s insight come to you:
- Now read 1 Kings 4:33. Do you see the story of Jesus: His regal, magnificence as a mighty king in the cedar tree who took on a humble, lowly position among mankind as the hyssop? Reflect on the marvel of this flash of His glory hidden in the horticulture:
- Do you have a situation where you are acting as a “mighty cedar” when being the lowly hyssop might be a better approach (see Nogah Hareuveni’s quotation on page 102)?
- Write a prayer of thanksgiving for the cleansing Jesus has given us, washing us from sin by His blood:



And as she sat there, she began to sob. God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, “What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid; God has heard the boy crying as he lies there. Lift the boy up and take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation.” Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. So she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink. **Genesis 21: 16–19 NIV**

- Hagar reveals a precious name of the Lord, The One Who Sees To It, *Jehovah Jireh*, or The One Who Provides. Think about how this story has reiterated in your life—a time when you felt lowly yet the Lord heard your heart’s cry and provided for you:
- Does your experience reflect the Word of Psalm 116:6-7?

Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink of water.” Surprised, she said, “Why would a Jewish man ask a Samaritan woman for a drink of water?” Jesus replied, “If you only knew who I am and the gift that God wants to give you—you’d ask me for a drink, and I would give to you living water.” **John 4:6–10 TPT**

- Do you live alive in the revitalizing current of Jesus’ Living Water, or do you feel wearied, worn down, and deadened from the darkness of the world?
- Do you want to ask Jesus for a drink (John 4:10)?

Drought is not a matter of a hurricane, a tornado, or a flood. It is menacingly slow and patient, wearing down the vitality of the landscape. Damage may go unnoticed until it is irreparable ... If a good thing can come from a drought, it may be a renewed appreciation for water and its inherent and continual value.

CHARLES W.G. SMITH, THE WEATHER-RESILIENT GARDEN, 2004

- Even Jesus came to the well physically thirsty, yet he used his need as an opportunity to ask the woman for help. As they interacted, he became the one to help her, revealing the source of Living Water. What physical needs do you have right now that could be an opportunity to draw others to Jesus' Living Water?

A generous person will prosper, and anyone who gives water will receive a flood in return. Proverbs 11:25 ISV

- Write a prayer of thanksgiving for all the plants and trees God has given us...and all the seeds, too (Genesis 1:26-30):
- Describe other ways that you know God to be generous:
- What are some of the ways you like to be generous with all God has given you?

A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth.

John 19:29 NRSV

- Do you grow herbs from the mint family in your garden – rosemary, thyme, sage, oregano, basil, or mint? Did you realize hyssop was this type of fragrant plant?
- How often do you brush the leaves to release their scent?

- Think about what the aroma means to you and write a prayer about Christ's forgiveness imagining the fragrance:

But thanks be to God! He always leads us triumphantly by the Messiah and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of knowing him.
2 Corinthians 2:14 ISV

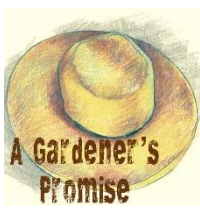


Closing Prayer

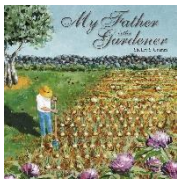
Dearest Lord, thank you for the many ways that my thirst and my garden's need for water can connect me to you. This common compound is a profound spiritual guide, reminding me that You are always ready to quench my longing for hope and unfailing love. You pour out to us when we feel needy and You flood us with Your goodness and generosity...and the water metaphors go on and on! Especially though, lingering beside a well of water, You revealed your Living Water, that is, Your Holy Spirit who will come and fill me so that I can always be refreshed. O Lord, how blessed to be constantly revitalized in a world that wears me out! Thank you, Jehovah Jireh, for hearing my cries when I feel deserted. Bring this all back around whenever I head out to my garden to water and let the summer ahead hold special moments for you and me watering my garden together. In Jesus name, Amen.

You'll be like a well-watered garden, a gurgling spring that never runs dry. Isaiah 58:11 The Message





[A Gardener's Promise](#) explores God's forever-with-you devotion to us. More than a casual sentiment, God's love is an enriching commitment to dig into everything together, a promise to hang your hat on. Part journal questions, part planting guide, this 7-part series has been created as a companion to [My Father is the Gardener, Devotions in Botany and Gardening of the Bible](#), a way to work out God's profound assurance in the backyard, arriving at Resurrection Day with a deeper grasp of what Christ has for us in revival life.



Enjoy Shelley's latest book, a perfect study for Lent and the herald of spring. *My Father is the Gardener* digs into the plants, gardening, and landscapes of the Bible, unearthing inspiration in the routine ways of caring for plants and keeping a garden. Now available at BRIT Press, Powell's Bookstore, and Amazon. Click to order: www.gardenindelight.com/books/my-father-is-the-gardener/



Visit the Plant Guide for more information on growing the plants of the Bible in your own garden. Find [Papyrus – Garden In Delight](#) and [Hyssop – Garden In Delight](#)



Find more in the [Garden in Delight Devotions Blog](#) on plants and water in [Water Savvy](#) and [Water-Colored Plants for your Garden](#)

Photo Credits: ©2018 Shelley S. Cramm Papyrus fronds dance at the entrance to the San Antonio Botanical Garden, where waterfalls and pools greet visitors with refreshment; Gardener's hat, drawing by Layla Luna; ©2022 Shelley S. Cramm Papyrus planted in my garden last summer, notice the watering layers in this photo – hyssop in the background on the left and watering can on the right; ©2019 Shelley S. Cramm Hyssop in bloom at the U. S. Botanical Garden; Fronds in water with bird from Guerin, F.E., Director. *Dictionnaire pittoresque d'histoire naturelle et des phénomènes de la nature*. Vol. 7. (Paris: Au Bureau de Souscription, 1838). Plate 459. Image from the Biodiversity Heritage Library. Contributed by the British Museum of Natural History. <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/page/36061291#page/114/mode/1up> ; Watering can with droplets by Layla Luna; Bonelli, Giorgio. Hortus Romanus juxta systems Tournefortianum Paulo. Vol. 1. (Romae: Sumptibus Bouchard et Gravier, 1772–1793). Plate 18. Rare Book Division, The New York Public Library. "Maiorana tenui folia = Persa gentile = Marjolaine. [Marjoram]" *The New York Public Library Digital Collections*. 1772–1793. digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47dd-cb63-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99 ; Wellies by Layla Luna; ©2019 Shelley S. Cramm Papyrus with a water-filled pot at the U.S. Botanical Garden – yes, both papyrus and hyssop plants were on display when I visited in 2019. All drawings by Layla Luna created exclusively for My Father is the Gardener are copyrighted material. For copyright permission, please contact Shelley S. Cramm, shelleycramm@gardeninDelight.com

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