

**The Art of Porch Sittin’**

There was a time when porch sittin’ was as vital to the day as eating, drinking, sleeping, and working. Who doesn’t remember that when it was hotter inside than it was outdoors, people headed to the porch to sit a spell and relax, talk to family and friends, unwind and wait for the fireflies to make their evening appearance? It became a tradition long ago, especially here in the south, and a way of life. That was why every home was built with a porch. It was as indispensable as a kitchen.

Then technology and a faster pace of life began changing all that. Air conditioning kept people indoors because Lordy it really was hotter outdoors and who wanted to sit on a porch and sweat? Long working hours drove another nail into the porch coffin. Arriving home from work at 7pm or later, rarely did people want to sit on the porch doin’ nothing, even though doin’ nothing could be the best part of the day. Eventually home builders got the message that homebuyers weren’t so keen on porches anymore and stopped including porches in their designs. As time marched on the only way to buy a house with a porch was to find an old house with a porch of yesteryear.

Fast forward half a century or more and porches are once again in high demand. Families are recognizing that porch sittin’ has it attributes and spending time on the porch is good for the soul. There’s just something about a porch that boosts the spirit and relieves what aches, mentally or physically.

Now if you’ve never done any porch sittin’ you might be wondering how to do it. I know, what a ridiculous notion, you just sit on the porch, right? Well, yes and no. There is an artform to proper porch sittin.’ I know, because I’ve always wanted a porch. I grew up in nice houses, though none with a porch. As an adult none of the homes I’ve lived in had a porch. Even so, I never gave up hope. I knew that one day I would have a porch and it would be my little slice of heaven. Two years ago, when hubby and I bought our current home, one of the attributes I liked most about the house was that it had a big back porch. Right away we started porch sittin’, even though it needed some TLC and we knew little about the correct way to porch sit. I was confident that we would figure it out. And we have. Over the last two years I’ve learned a few things about proper porch sittin.’ Important stuff. Everyone knows that if you’re gonna do something worthwhile, like properly sittin’ on a porch, you might as well do it right, right? So, here’s what I’ve concluded are the essentials of picture-perfect porch sittin’.

First, and this one is really important: never sit on the porch without first getting something cool to drink – a lemonade, iced tea, a mint julep, a glass of wine, a bottle of Shiner, whatever. If it’s real hot outside, you’re gonna need it.

Sit on a comfortable chair. Though I’m no brain surgeon I figured out that the more comfortable the seating, the more I’ll want to sit outdoors. The rattan loveseat and chair with cushions are comfortable enough, for now. Next up I’m going get a couple of rocking chairs and hang a swing. There’s something about moving a little in a rocking chair or a swing that relaxes the mind and adds an old-fashioned charm to the day.

As soon as I settle in, I listen for birds singing, especially the cardinal’s trill, mockingbirds imitating every bird in the yard, crickets chirping, and squirrels admonishing my dog. Their melodic sounds mimic a symphony that lulls me into serene bliss.

To get really good at porch sittin’ ya gotta make it a daily ritual. Sometimes I sit for an hour, other times just 15 minutes. It’s something I have to do every day. It’s become a habit, something I treasure and look forward to each day. If for some reason I don’t get out there, it feels like something’s missing.

By the way, I’m not the only one who likes a good porch. Bugs like em too. A lot – to the point that they have successfully driven me off the porch a few times and that really upsets me. It’s my porch – who are they to drive me inside? Hubby came to the rescue. He visited our neighborhood hardware store and got a mosquito trap. They sure do work wonders. He’s also installing a ceiling fan. I expect that it will blow those suckers into the next county. At least I hope so.

If you have some thinking and possibly deciding to do you won’t find a better place to weigh your options than a porch. I’ve done a fair amount of thinking in my lifetime and I can unequivocally say that porches are the very best place to think.

You can porch sit any time it suits you, that’s the beauty of having a porch. My favorite time to porch sit is at day’s end; you won’t find a better spot to sit quietly and drink in twilight’ssong as you await fireflies take flight and light up the garden. At that magical intersect between day and night the sky changes, the air shifts and you hear sounds you don’t hear at any other time of day. And suddenly you see the porch for what it is -- a place to soothe the soul, to entertain reveries and your deepest wishes, and a place where memories are born.