By Kylee Baumle

As a garden book reviewer, I receive quite a number of books in the mail each week for me to consider giving my opinion as to whether they're worth the time and money readers might spend on them. It may come as no surprise when I say that I look them over and for the most part, choose to read only the ones that I think I'm going to like. I try to keep things positive that way.

There are very few books that I'd say are outstanding, but there are an awful lot of good ones. One that I recently read and reviewed was "The Roots of My Obsession." It's a collection of essays by some well-known figures in the world of horticulture, telling how they got started gardening, what they like best about it and why they do it.

I'm always intrigued as to how and why people choose the extra-curricular activities they do. I come from a family of gardeners, but I'm the only member of our family that doesn't golf. I can't say that I dislike golf, it's just that I'm not good at it. I'm not only not good, I'm really horrible. And as with most sports, if you aren't at least halfway decent at it, it's not going to be any fun.

So I garden. Now that doesn't mean I'm particularly good at that either. But, that's the thing about gardening, you don't have to be good at it to enjoy it. Some would say the same thing about golf, but to me, golf's just hard.

Studies have shown that gardening is good for you in ways that have nothing to do with your skills as a gardener. There is a certain bacteria contained in the soil that when disturbed as in when you're digging in it is released into the air. You breathe it in and it causes a rise in serotonin in the brain. That's the stuff that makes you feel good.

There are plants that purify the air. All plants exchange carbon dioxide for oxygen, but some have the added ability to filter toxins from the air around them. That means even growing plants inside your house is good for your health.

Just looking at flowers and plants has been shown to have a positive effect on healing, which is one reason you'll see gardens at hospitals. There are also studies that suggest that work environments that contain live plants have more productive and happier employees.

I know. There's evidence that golf is good for you, too. Fresh air, exercise, the FFA (Fellowship of Frustrated Athletes) and all that, but I'm of the "good walk spoiled" mindset if you try to put a golf club in my hands.

If you enjoy golf, I'm happy for you. If you enjoy gardening, I'm even happier. We actually have more in common than you might think. We both find our happiness filling holes in the ground.

Read more at Kylee's blog, Our Little Acre, at www.ourlittleacre.com and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/OurLittleAcre. Contact her at PauldingProgressGardener@gmail.com.