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Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

By Cynthia Brian



What would Thanksgiving be without turkeys ... eating our grubs? Photo Cynthia Brian

As Thanksgiving approaches we find ourselves giving thanks for our family, friends, health, and jobs. But how often do we stop to give gratitude for Mother Nature? As I strolled through my garden during my morning meditation walk, I was overcome with appreciation for the natural world that surrounded me. My garden enhances and nourishes all of my senses. The fiery ruby leaves on my liquid amber or the saffron pumpkin cloaked potted pistache in their autumnal wardrobe add a carnival of color to the landscape. The fragrance from my Angel Face roses is a sweet scent that I dream of bottling. The quail calling to one another, the gurgling of the fountain, and the whistling of the wind through the palms are sounds that calm my spirit and engage my inspiration. On my rounds, I always stop to sample the edibles, tasting the new florets on my cabbage, a sprig of mint to freshen my breath, or plucking a few cumquats to add to my afternoon tea. Touching everything, I

arrive back in my kitchen with bouquets of blossoms or moss covered branches to decorate my desk and most of all, to stimulate my creativity. Over the years, I've developed a sixth sense surrounding my outside world. I feel more connected to life, to nature, and to myself while I'm in the garden. And I am grateful for the kinship.

Our gardens are growing universities, teaching us daily the values for enhanced living. From my garden teacher I have learned patience, responsibility, gentleness, kindness, and forgiveness. There are no mistakes in nature and failure is just fertilizer. When it began to rain the last day of October, I quickly ran to fertilize my brown, dry lawn. Today it is emerald green, instructing me about the importance of resiliency. We all bounce back from challenges and tomorrow is another day.

This year when we celebrate Thanksgiving, my table will be laden with the goodness from my garden including my mashed home grown potatoes infused with thyme, sage, and rosemary, a wine roasted turkey stuffed with orchard apples, onions, and grapes, plus a fresh picked salad of baby lettuces, arugula, kale, fennel, and sliced Fuji persimmons. Grace will be one of gratitude for the bounty and beauty that Mother Nature provides every day of the year, no matter what the season.

As I leave work in San Francisco, each time I witness the spectacular sunset in my rear view mirror going east on the Bay Bridge, I breathe a sigh of relief as the grazing cows on the hillside come into view. The forests of trees, the smell of the wild grasses, the capaciousness of our open spaces, and the sounds of birds replace the honking horns, crowded streets, and urine soaked sidewalk odors of the city. I give thanks that I have the opportunity to spend my days in a tranquil environment where I breathe clean air and enjoy the lushness of the valleys within a short drive of cultural amenities. Even the eerie howls of the coyotes singing at the moon, the herds of hungry deer dining along my driveway, and the wild turkeys roosting in my pines roots me in gratitude for my rustic simplicity.

I am home. And home is where my heart is.

May you enjoy a cornucopia of blessings and joy this November with your loved ones. Thank you for being such dedicated, involved readers. I appreciate you.

Cynthia Brian's Mid-Month Reminders

FERTILIZE your lawn and yard at the first drops of rain. We've had a warm fall, so it's not too late to give a jolt of nutrition to help the landscape withstand the winter months.

PICK fuyu persimmons now to eat and enjoy fresh, in salads, or other appetizers. As soon as your Hachiya persimmons are bright orange, they can also be harvested, however, they cannot be eaten until soft.

PLANT chrysanthemums to brighten your walkways, containers, and patio.

ADD a tropical flair to your Thanksgiving décor with an arrangement of the beautiful orange Birds of Paradise.

CONGRATULATE the wild turkeys crossing through your landscape. They are lucky they are still eating grubs and not part of the Thanksgiving feast!

PLANT easy to grow, low maintenance Dutch iris, snowdrops, grape hyacinth, daffodils and other spring bulbs for a surprise splash of color come March or April.

DIVIDE overgrown perennials.

RAKE leaves, adding them to the mulching pile. Let your kids frolic in them first, making memories that last a lifetime.

WEED weekly as the rains come to avoid an overabundance of unwanted plants in spring.

SOW wild flower seeds for a natural, woody look.

GIVE thanks for your garden, our hills, valleys, and Mother Nature.

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing. Happy Thanksgiving.

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Cynthia Brian

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The Goddess

Gardener

www.GoddessGardener.com

Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com

925-377-STAR

I am available as a speaker, designer, and consultant.



Fuyu persimmons are ripe for the plucking. Eat them like apples or add to salads.



Gazing balls illuminate a fall chrysanthemum garden.



The ultimate drought resistant landscape of grasses and olive trees.



Cynthia Brian

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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