

Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

Outside in

By Cynthia Brian

"I went out for a walk and finally concluded to stay out till sundown, for going out, I found, was really going in." John Muir



View of Mt. Diablo through the olive tree.

Photos Cynthia Brian

As summer draws to a close, it's natural to want to grab the last rays of outdoor living. With temperatures in the triple digits, however, unless we are splashing in a pool, many people are staying indoors with the air conditioner turned on high. I tend to march to a different drum, preferring to sweat through the heat to enjoy the hazy, hot days of the season al fresco.

Since harvest time is quickly approaching, I tromped through the hills with Andrea Wood, a former financial broker turned entrepreneur who in 2010 purchased 22 acres above Campolindo High School with the dream of planting a vineyard, olive orchard, and building a local winery. A few years ago, she planted 125 olive trees but, alas, in June, a fire blazed to the top of her property burning many of her young trees. As we hiked her hills, we were surprised to witness the resiliency of the olive as new shoots sprouted from the trunks of the scorched trees. Three cheers for Mother Nature's ability to rebound from devastation. Trees that were untouched are filled

with fruit which will ripen and be harvested in November by her family. From the top of the drive, olive trees sway in the wind with views of Mt. Diablo in the background. In May, she will plant her southern facing hillside with cabernet sauvignon in a manner reminiscent of Tuscan vineyards. Plans for her winery are forthcoming. In the meantime, deer and turkeys call her hillsides home.

With this hot and dry weather, there is a high danger of fire. Be proactive and remove flammable objects, debris, brush, and wood from around the perimeter of your dwelling. The National Weather Service has been issuing red flag and heat wave warnings that may continue through the month of September. Stay hydrated, wear a hat when outdoors, provide plenty of water to your pets, and watch your plants for signs of stress.

It's been extremely enjoyable watching the colorful sunsets from the comfort of my patio chairs. Although I maintain my distance, observing the plethora of wildlife that prance and glide through my own landscape is mes-



A burned olive tree sprouts again.

merizing. Deer, turkeys, skunks, raccoons, lizards, snakes, hawks, hummingbirds, and even coyotes and foxes are constant visitors, not all welcome.

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Pull up a chair to watch a September sunset.