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Cynthia Brian's Digging Deep for July

By Cynthia Brian



Typing a hammock between trees offers a place to relax. Photos Cynthia Brian

"Though we travel the world over to find the beautiful, we must carry it with us or we find it not." ~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

While I was traveling in Southeast Asia, I was enthralled with the multitude of hammocks hung everywhere ... on balconies, under eaves of storefronts, under houses built on stilts on the Mekong River, between trees in a field, in marketplace stalls, even on rickety boats. Because of the intense heat and humidity that assaults life between noon and 4 in the afternoon, workdays begin in the early morning, then continue until 9 or 10 at night, while in between everyone cools off with a swinging siesta.

In the Amazon rainforest, my husband and I slept in hammocks covered by mosquito netting. The first hammocks date back to over 1,000 years ago and were made from the bark of the Hamak tree. Christopher Columbus is credited with bringing hammocks back to Europe after his encounter with the Taino tribes who tied

these nets between trees for their slumber and protection. Because hammocks were off the ground, there was less chance of bites from insects, snakes, rats, or other creatures.

My favorite hammock experiences have always been at beaches in tropical locales where hammocks are attached to swaying palm trees. In Hawaii, Tahiti, Bermuda, the many islands of the Caribbean, and throughout the coastlines of Central and South America, I have always scouted the sand for the perfect rocking repose where I can read a book, take a nap, or just listen to the pounding waves while the birds chirp in paradise.

Summer is the perfect time to lounge in a hammock under the shade, especially after a few hours of strenuous gardening. Swiss researchers published a scientific explanation why hammocks are loved the world over. The gentle rocking motion of a hammock synchronizes brain waves allowing us to get to sleep quicker while attaining a deeper state of relaxation. No wonder babies quiet when being rocked!

Between my Japanese maples and my magnolia trees, I secured two double hammocks so that two to four people could enjoy the benefits of a summertime break. It is restful to sway in these hammocks with the fragrance of my roses and lavender wafting around me. I watch the butterflies and bees darting throughout my flowers while I listen to the sound of the breeze and the crooning songbirds.

Hammocks are versatile because they are affordable super space savers, flexible, and are easily moved and stored. They are perfect camping trip companions. The net hammocks purchased in Vietnam pack into a small ball, while the heavier cloth hammocks I bought stateside roll into a cloth bag for storage.

If traveling is not on your agenda for this summer, consider a staycation with the potential to transport your dreams to exotic distant lands by installing a hammock in your backyard. Undulating in my hammock, I can be anywhere my imagination takes me.

It's hammock time. You can't touch this!

Cynthia Brian's Mid-Month Gardening Tips:

VISIT gorgeous gardens while you travel. For the best private gardens in America that are open to visitors visit www.opendaysprogram.org.

SHAKE out boots or shoes that you leave outside before putting them on your feet. A visitor may have taken up residence inside and give your toes a nibble. (I've had lizards, frogs, spiders, and more in my gardening boots!)

PERUSE bulb catalogues to see what new bulbs are emerging for fall planting. Orders will need to be placed before the end of the month for autumn shipping.

JOIN internationally acclaimed speakers, exhibitors, and chefs at America's largest celebration of pure food with heirloom and organic displays, heritage livestock, poultry, and more at The National Heirloom Exposition Sept. 11-13 in Santa Rosa. Mark your calendars now. Visit www.TheHeirloomExpo.com.

EAT more watermelon! A standard slice provides 1/3 of your daily vitamins A and C, plus you'll get lots of potassium and lycopene with only a 90-calorie bump.

REPAIR broken irrigation pipes immediately. If you notice that your sprinklers have little pressure, look for leaks. Besides wasting water, and the cost incurred, your garden could suffer without proper amounts of H₂O.

CALL your electric company (PG&E in our area) if you are planning to dig deep holes so that they can make sure you are digging in a safe place.

SUCCESSION planting is in order if you like a continual crop of lettuces, carrots, beets, radishes and corn.

PREPARE a refreshing Jell-O salad that looks like fresh flowers with an online video tutelage.

GROW sunflowers to attract bees and pollinators to help terminate the "bee-apocalypse".

IMPRESS friends by growing adenium desert rose, an appealing succulent with deep red or pink blossoms that truly shouts, "It's summer!"

ROOT cuttings from hydrangeas to expand your collection.

PLANT lamium pink pom pom in a rock wall to create a crack garden.

CUT pixie roses for a simple indoor arrangement. If you love roses but have a small area, try planting miniature roses that pack a punch.

RELAX this summer with a hammock tied between two trees or poles.

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing.
Cynthia Brian



Dark pink hydrangeas are a favorite for root cuttings.



Adenium desert rose features bright red pink blossoms. Stems are poisonous.



Lamium pink pompom grows in cracks in a rock wall.



Miniature roses grow amongst the sage.



A floral salad made with Jell-O is a refreshing summer treat.



Summer is hammock time for Cynthia Brian. Cynthia Brian, The Goddess Gardener, raised in the vineyards of Napa County, is a New York Times best-selling author, actor, radio personality, speaker, media and writing coach as well as the Founder and Executive Director of Be the Star You Are1r 501 c3. Tune into Cynthia's Radio show and order her books at www.StarStyleRadio.com. Buy a copy of the new book, Growing with the Goddess Gardener, at www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store. Available for hire for projects and lectures. Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com www.GoddessGardener.com

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