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## Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

By Cynthia Brian



The gazebo anchors the pool in this pretty backyard. Photos Cynthia Brian

"Happiness is a day by the pool."

I can't remember if I first learned to swim in the creek behind our house or in the big round cattle troughs in the hills. Growing up on the ranch both locations offered a cool respite from the heat of the day, however it was the makeshift pool at the end of the September grape harvest when my dad would wash out the gigantic tanks used to haul the grapes to the winery that gave us the most joy. We'd fill the bins with well water and we'd have an instant deep swimming pool, albeit with the strong scent of fermentation. Splashing around in pink water was grand amusement!

By the time I was a freshman in high school, our parents decided it was time for a real pool. Since we lived in the boondocks, 12 miles from the nearest town, they knew that if we had a pool, all of our friends would hang out at our house and my parents could keep a watchful eye on their five children. My dad got on the Caterpillar tractor, dug a big hole, and built us a pool.

True to our parents' expectations, the pool was an instant hit, complete with a plethora of screaming teens playing Marco Polo.

My Mom went to work landscaping around the pool, creating lounging areas, installing umbrellas, adding two brick circles with wrought iron patio tables and chairs, and of course, plenty of containers of flowers. Today that original pool is still the focal point of our ranch entertainment where we gather for swimming, barbecues, bonfires and family fun.

The next best thing to an ocean, lake or river view is a pool in the backyard offering a bucolic vista with the sensibility of nature. A swimming pool has the ability to anchor a landscape. Learning to swim is a necessary life skill and the exercise of swimming is one of the best full body workouts. Much research has been done on the calming effects that being around water has on humans. Stress levels are lowered by designs with both green and blue spaces: the green being plants and trees and the blue are water features.

I am a water baby and a nature girl with an urgent need to be surrounded by both. Whether you want to incorporate a pool that resembles a natural lake or a lap pool for strenuous swimming, having a private pool will offer you, your family, and friends years of enjoyment while enhancing the beauty of your garden. Children and teens not only get playful exercise but the pool will become a hub of activity with birthday parties and other celebrations. And, you'll know where they are and with whom!

In the recent article "Poolside Living" by Cathy Dausman (<https://www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue1214/Poolside-living.html>) suggestions for installation were chronicled. Make sure to add solar to your budget for both the economic and environmental benefits. If you've been pondering the idea of adding a big splash of water to your landscape, this is the month to take the plunge in order to be ready for the next summer season.

Although I savor the memories, I doubt I'll ever swim in a cattle trough or grape tank again, but I will always be ready to dip into a cool pool.

Cynthia Brian's Mid-Month Gardening Guide

WATER lawns and perennials deeply and thoroughly. September is notoriously hot and it's essential to keep an eye on your plants. If they are drooping, they are thirsty.

IRRIGATE succulents, cactus, and native specimens sparingly as their water requirements are minimal.

HYDRATE yourself constantly. Don't garden in the heat of the day as you could get dangerously dehydrated. Toil in the morning and the evening.

CUT back hollyhocks to the ground once they have finished flowering. Save the seedpods to share with friends. Within a few weeks, you'll see new green growth as the hollyhocks will continue to thrive.

PRUNE fruit trees after harvesting.

STAKE any smaller trees that may break in winter winds.

CONTINUE deadheading roses and flowering perennials to prolong the blooms until winter.

DONATE to Operation Fire Disaster Relief to help in California's recovery. [www.BetheStarYouAre.org](http://www.BetheStarYouAre.org)

RAKE leaves as they fall and put them in the compost bin. If you can shred the leaves, they will compost quicker.

KEEP mulch away from trunks of trees and around shrubbery.

BEGIN preparations to renew lawns. October is the month to reseed or install a new lawn. Research what type of grass you want to install. I'm a fan of Pearl's Premium. Check it out online at [www.PearlsPremium.com](http://www.PearlsPremium.com).

GRAB some freebies while visiting me and other contributors to my eighth book, "Be the Star You Are! Millennials to Boomers Celebrating the Gifts of Positive Voices in a Changing Digital World" at the Pear and Wine Festival from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 22. Get your books autographed with sales benefitting

literacy outreach projects. Visit <http://www.CynthiaBrian.com/books>. Thank you to Lamorinda Weekly for sponsoring.

COLLECT seedpods from marigold, bachelor button, amaranth, calendula, Four O'clock, hollyhock, zinnia and forget-me-not. Spread on a cookie sheet to dry or place in brown paper bags. Next month they will be ready to scatter for a reward of flowers in spring and summer.

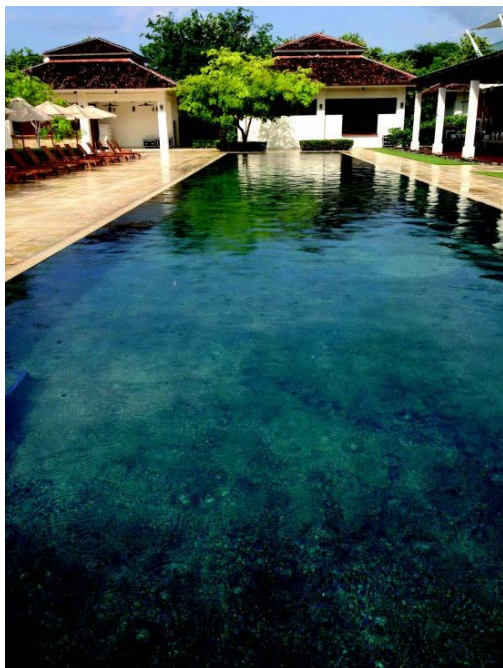
PLACE hay under growing pumpkins to keep them from rotting.

PLANT asters, the colorful workhorse of the fall garden that create habitats for pollinators and grow in poor soil.

SWIM and enjoy the final days of summer. If you are considering installing a pool, start the design process now. Find inspiration in the photos in this issue.

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing.

Cynthia Brian



A long, shallow pool perfect for floating.



Splish, splash we are taking a bath! Even these geese love private pools!



Lap pool, flanked by lawn, with an ethereal arbor at one end.



Trees cast striking shadows on this tranquil pool and spa.



Lights in and around a tropical pool add elegance to the night landscape



An elegant cabana offers pristine poolside dining.



Lush landscaping plus swimming, volleyball, and a waterfall.



A serenity pool mimics a natural lake.



Cynthia Brian lecturing at Writer's World with her eight published books. 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 Are! (r) 501 c3. Tune into Cynthia's Radio show and order her books at [www.StarStyleRadio.com](http://www.StarStyleRadio.com). Buy a copy of her new books, Growing with the Goddess Gardener and Be the Star You Are! Millennials to Boomers at [www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store](http://www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store). Available for hire for projects and lectures. [Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com](mailto:Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com) [www.GoddessGardener.com](http://www.GoddessGardener.com)

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