Cynthia Brian’s Garden Goddess Guide for Increasing Health Through Nature

**IMPROVE** physical skills for kids by getting them to play outside more.

**BUY** a supersize bubble wand and blow bubbles in the yard.

**EAT** healthier with a Mediterranean diet loaded with freshly harvested vegetables and fruits.

**SOURCE** produce hyper-locally at your Farmers’ Market or rural fruit stands if you are not growing your own. Summer is the optimum time for the freshest fruits and vegetables with high nutritional values. Did you know that the USDA defines purchasing local produce and food as within 400 miles of your state? Most food on the American dinner table has traveled between 1,500-2,500 miles, according to the Worldwatch Institute meaning that nutrients and antioxidants have been diminished. If you really want to pack a punch with your food, you have options. Eating in season while growing your own or being part of a community garden is the number one solution. Frequenting farmers’ markets will reduce your carbon footprint and offer fresher alternatives. Or take a drive to a local farming community to purchase freshly harvest crops at road stands. This serves a dual purpose of getting you out into nature as an RX for better health and stocking your kitchen with food that will be delicious and nutritious.

**FLOAT** bougainvilleas bloom as a creative centerpiece.

**SOAK** your tired feet in a bowl of warm water filled with healing marigolds and chrysanthemums.

**COOL** off on a cushion of green moss.

**EXPRESS** awe at a dragonfly hovering on a reed in the water.

**ENLIGHTEN** your perspective with a copy of “Last Child in the Woods” by Richard Louv.

**PICK** chamomile flowers to make a soothing tea. Save some of the seeds to plant.

**INSTALL** a birdhouse and a fountain to entice the songbirds.

**WANDER** through a colorful succulent garden to see the various textures and forms.

**WONDER** at the sight of a flower that you’ve never seen before.

**SOAK** in the beauty of the delicate blossoms on a silk tree.

**GAZE** at the clouds and be grateful for your health.

**DRINK** plenty of water to stay hydrated.

**LISTEN** to the sounds of our beautiful earth to experience calm.

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing!