

January 2011 - Digging Deep

Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian-Goals for the Garden

“The doctor can bury his mistakes but an architect can only advise his client to plant vines.” - Frank Lloyd Wright

Every year at this time I spend hours of coaching sessions helping clients create goals for the upcoming year. The beginning of a new year excites one to give birth to new ideas and design a vision for the future. Unfortunately by February 1, statistics indicate that most people have abandoned their goals. Resolutions can be set and accomplished all year long when you make SMART goals. SMART stands for

SPECIFIC

MEASURABLE

ACHIEVABLE

RELEVANT

TIMELY

Recently while I was working with a regular client, she asked me if I would help her set her garden goals for the year. Of course, I was delighted and after writing my own garden goals, I felt the exercise would be worthwhile for the loyal readers of Digging Deep. Last year I modeled this gardening column after my motto, Read, Plant, Grow. This year I propose Explore, Experiment, Experience.

Now that it is winter, the inclement weather presents the perfect opportunity to design our dreams. There is little manual labor to be done outdoors. It's time to exercise our brains, explore the possibilities, and decide how we want our landscapes to serve us for the future.

Let me begin by describing the steps to SMART goals. When creating SMART goals for your garden, always ask yourself, “what do I mean by that?”

1. SPECIFIC-Planting rosemary, thyme, sage, basil, and oregano is specific, while wanting an herb garden is not.

2. MEASURABLE-Planting rosemary, thyme, sage, basil, and oregano the third weekend of May is measurable. Your actions must be calculable so you know when you have achieved success. We can not measure “wants”.

3. ACHIEVABLE-Planting rosemary, thyme, sage, basil, and oregano the third weekend of May so that I'll have a bounty of flavorful herbs for my 4th of July barbecue is achievable. Be realistic about what you can truly accomplish. Success breeds success. When we set

goals that are reachable, we feel competent.

4. RELEVANT-Planting rosemary, thyme, sage, basil, and oregano the third weekend of May so that I'll have a bounty of flavorful herbs for my 4th of July barbecue to enhance the tasty enjoyment and continued health of my family and guests is relevant. To be relevant, the goal must really matter to you. If you don't have a good reason for doing it, you'll drop the goal after a few weeks of attempts.

5. TIMELY-Planting rosemary, thyme, sage, basil, and oregano the third weekend of May so that I'll have a bounty of flavorful herbs for my 4th of July barbecue to enhance the tasty enjoyment and continued health of my family and guests plus savor a summer of palatable satisfaction provides an end point. Even if you want to have a goal forever, put an end date to a cycle, then start anew when accomplished.

What's on your list of things that you've always wanted in your backyard but never had the time, money, or inclination to accomplish? A sampling of suggestions besides planting your herbs may include creating, adding, building, buying, cleaning, or planting

- A butterfly garden
- A cutting garden
- A vegetable plot
- A barbecue box
- A meditation meadow
- Attractions for birds, bees, and hummingbirds
- Pathways to paradise
- A perennial patch
- Play structures
- Swings from giant trees
- Relaxation regions
- Benches and outdoor sitting rooms
- Space, mood, and spotlighting
- Ponds, waterfalls, fountains, and water features
- Compost bins or piles
- Succulents and cactus
- Endemic, natural specimens
- Fruit orchard
- Vineyard
- Seasonal bulbs



A scarlet tipped chartreuse cymbidium paired with bluish bergenia blossoms brighten an indoor hall.

Photos Cynthia Brian



Narcissus mingled with Russian Sage brighten the winter landscape with beauty and perfume.