

# Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for May

*\*Love is a fruit in season at all times, and within reach of every hand. Mother Teresa*

The early April showers did indeed bring May flowers. Gardens are rich in birdsong, new growth, and blooms that are bigger, brighter, and more boisterous than years past. With the record highs of warm weather this May, we need to be diligent in watering, fertilizing, and protecting our homes. Fire season has arrived early. Make sure to walk your perimeters to determine what debris must be discarded. On Mother's Day, give a gift from the garden to the magnificent mom in your life. The sunshine is invigorating so get up, get out, and get going. Put a spring in your step and a song on your lips. It's merry May and time to play. Get thee into the garden to enjoy the new birth of the season.

- **HARDEN** off the seedlings that you have started indoors by putting them outdoors in a sheltered location for a few hours each day after your Frost-Free Date, before bringing them in at night. Do this for a week to 10 days, gradually lengthening the time outdoors. This will help your seedlings avoid transplant shock.
- **FOLLOW** up ground fertilizing of flowers, perennials, vegetables, and fruits with foliar and micro-nutrients at appropriate times during the growing season.
- **DOWNLOAD** a free Beginner's Guide to Gardening from Google. It's basic yet filled with helpful data. Works on Android devices. For iPhones try the \$2, Garden Tracker.
- **EAT** the flowers from nasturtiums, roses, arugula, cilantro, thyme, roses, basil, and sage. They add flavor and beauty to many dishes.
- **CELEBRATE** National Public Gardens Day on May 10 by visiting a public garden, arboretum, or botanical garden. Many are offering free passes for admission.
- **ELEVATE** any small outdoor space to an attractive natural art form with vertical plantings. Make your own or buy a pre-designed wall planter.
- **IMPROVE** the biodiversity of your soil ecosystem through mulching and composting. Spring and fall are the ideal times to increase organic matter and the humus content. Adding compost to your garden reduces the need for chemical fertilizers, allows the soil to hold water well which means less watering.
- **PICK** up the last of the spent camellia blossoms from your garden to protect your plant for next season.
- **PULL** out the leaves of your spring bulbs only when they have completely dried and are crackly. When you tug on them, the leaves will come off easily without disturbing the bulb. Remember, if you pull or cut them while they are still green, necessary nutrients are not sent to the bulb for the next season's bloom.
- **QUARANTINE** any new plant for a few days before planting to make sure it is pest free.
- **CONTROL** ant colonies by creating a perimeter of boric acid powder around the garden.
- **HAND PICK** and destroy all caterpillars. The larvae of moths are voracious eaters and will defoliate a plant in a few days.
- **WAIT** until soil has been dry for at least a week before watering succulents.
- **HARVEST** multi-branched stalks of bearded iris in the cool of the morning for longer lasting blooms. Cut stems on an angle and plunge into cool water.
- **RAISE** herbs such as basil, cilantro, parsley, and sage in pots close to the kitchen for quick snips of flavor.
- **TEACH** patience and responsibility to children by providing them with their own private plot or pot to plant something they want to eat or enjoy.
- **EXCHANGE** seeds of your favorite flowers with a friend or neighbor.
- **SWEEP** debris from driveways, walkways, steps, and porches to freshen up for spring.
- **BRIGHTEN** your curb appeal with colorful annuals and perennials including petunias, zinnias, cleome, salvia, dahlias, snapdragons, impatiens, bachelor buttons, and gaura.
- **PERFUME** the air by planting jasmine, sweet pea, lilac, and citrus trees.
- **STOP** by the Be the Star You Are!® booth at the Moraga Faire to say hello to me on May 11, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. and take home a FREE bag of aromatic homegrown potpourri!
- **INCREASE** your green intake by planting antioxidant and vitamin rich dinosaur kale, arugula, and purslane. Delicious cooked or in salads.
- **SHOWER** your Mother, Mother-in-Law, or any cherished woman in your life with extra love on Mother's Day, May 12. She deserves flowers.

Wishing all you marvelous moms a memorable Mother's Day. You are the gardener's of life.

Happy gardening and happy growing to you!

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Cynthia Brian  
The Goddess Gardener  
Cynthia@goddessgardener.com  
www.goddessgardener.com



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## Does your yard look tired?

### Do you have weeds and your lawn has dead or dry spots?

Advance Tree Service can re-place lawns and upgrade irrigation systems, replace bender boards and add plants and flowers in only a few days. Don't waste water on an old lawn - a new and healthy lawn will not only look better but will save you water as well. Landscaping can add value and curb appeal. Good landscaping doesn't have to be time consuming or expensive. With the right plan and some creativity, you can easily be the envy of all your neighbors.

Advance Tree Service

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**925-376-6528**

**advancetree@sbcglobal.net www.advancetree.com**

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