

# Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

...continued from page D9



*Fence completely covered in scarlet trumpet vine.*

*Photos Cynthia Brian*

**Mosquitoes:** Plant lemongrass, the main repellent ingredient in citronella candles. Crush or dry the leaves, mix with alcohol or oil and apply to your body, clothing, or make a spray for outdoor areas as a deterrent. Set out citronella candles and torches. Buy Dunks for your fountains, which don't hurt wildlife but kill the mosquito larvae, and call Vector Control again to get mosquito fish if you have a pond. The ThermaCell Mosquito Repellent Patio Lantern sold at hardware and home stores is another great resource.

**Snails and Slugs:** If snails and slugs are munching your seedlings, handpick at night when they are feeding, wrap copper strips around perimeters of the problem area, or trap in pans of beer. Coffee grinds and wood ash are also deterrents. Make sure to remove garden debris and look under rocks and flowerpots. Since they are hermaphroditic, they will fertilize themselves producing 30 to 120 offspring that begin eating the moment they hatch.

With the irritants under control, focus your attention on pleasant summer guests. Quail, robins, finches, and orioles brighten the landscape with their song and their antics. Provide birdbaths, fountains, and feeders to keep them frolicking in your yard. Fill a clay saucer with water for the butterflies and if you have a swimming pool, rescue the bees that attempt a drink but are doomed to drown. Don't confuse bees with yellow jackets. Bees don't hover around food, only yellow jackets do.

The feast begins in the orchards, potagers, vegetable, and herb gardens. Plums, apricots, peaches, apples, nectarines, and cumquats are at their peak. Berries of many varieties ripen this month including blackberries, elderberries, blueberries, raspberries, fuchsia berries, and strawberries. With the exception of the elderberry, pick and eat straight from the vine or tree or make heavenly pies, smoothies, jams,

jellies, and sorbets. Bulb fennel boasts sprays of yellow flowers, tomatoes, peppers, zucchini, and cucumbers are sweet and prolific. Home gardeners are privy to their own customized produce aisle.

The season of plenty is upon us. Stand, salute, and raise the flag. The greatest reward is sharing the treasures from our own soil. A garden is to give. A garden is to grow.



*Magenta hydrangea blooms get as big as beach balls adding beauty to any landscape.*