

# Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

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As native South Africans, Naked Ladies go by many names-Magic Lilies, Amaryllis Belladonna, Belladonna Lily, Pink Ladies, even, Madonna lily. Whatever their name, they are certainly mystical with green spiky foliage that resembles agapanthus emerging in late winter, dying back by June, followed by long elegant leafless stalks highlighted by pure pink flower heads in late summer. Plant them anywhere you have deer invaders as deer won't eat them. Part of the Amaryllis family, they are toxic if ingested. Obviously warn children and keep pets from nibbling. They love full sun, tolerate a multitude of soil types, and don't drink much water. A single bulb multiplies quickly into many. Plant bulbs about three to four inches deep with their necks above ground and at least a foot apart. When they bloom, their two to three foot naked stems sway in the wind. Their sexy name derives from the fact that when they do bloom, not a trace of foliage is on the plant. Naked Ladies make terrific cut flowers and I used them throughout my décor to great advantage. As an added bonus, the hummingbirds flock to

their fragrant funnels.

Thanks to the boisterous and beautiful Naked Ladies, my garden party was a splendid success. After guests departed I sat on my deck gazing at the hillside. Sometimes I believe I live inside a Disney movie, the forest of Bambi, to be precise. Two mother deer with their fawns grazed on the remaining fallen plums, a young buck stood on his haunches reaching for the still green persimmons, cotton-tails joined the group foraging for leftovers as squirrels scampered to and from the apple trees. A flock of turkey hens flew into my Asian pear tree and began knocking the fruit down to their young poults. That was the end. I yelled: "Enough – the party is over!" The wild bunch stayed behind the newly erected higher fence line and no one bothered my precious Madonnas. As soon as they are finished parading their pretties, I will be dividing the clumps to fill my barren orchards. Perhaps I have discovered the ultimate plant predator proof product.

You can never underestimate the power of a woman, especially a Naked Lady.

*Hurray for the parade of leggy Naked Ladies dancing in the beds of violet spearmint flanked by the lavender crepe myrtles.*

## Comments from last month's "What We'll Do for a Buck!"

Thank you to the numerous readers who took the time to email me suggestions to arrest the plant plundering by the marauding bucks. From the number of emails I received, it's obvious that the wildlife is wreaking havoc on many of our landscapes and gardeners are trying everything possible. Below is a smattering of fun and funny notes that I received:

"Someday, we'll have to revert to buck shot guns!"

– Marcia

"Those varmints are mowing my plants. My dog has managed to exit. I am considering a higher fence. This might make an eagerly awaited Ph.D. thesis at some university school of forestry...?" – Bob

"Deer don't confront whirlygigs. The WGs move with the wind during the daytime or in the middle of the night and catch them unprepared. Scares them." – Lynn

"My buddies and I attempted to mark our territory along all our fence lines. Wish I could tell you it worked, but the bucks just added their more powerful piss." – Mark

"I found 'mountain lion urine' online at www.predatorpee.com. It hasn't deterred deer yet, but I sure would like to know how they gather that stuff!" – Irene



*Grapes, missed by the deer, are beginning to show color on the arbor.*

*Photos Cynthia Brian*