

Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for August

By Cynthia Brian

"I long to accomplish a great and noble task, but, it is my chief duty to accomplish small tasks as if they were great and noble." ~ Helen Keller

There are many ways to tackle a task.

With a drought in full swing, those of us with lawns are investigating every avenue to keep our playgrounds verdant. In Los Angeles, lawn painting has become a new lucrative business using non-toxic permanent dye applied to stressed grass. The green application lasts about 12 weeks without color fade or run-off. When the rains come, most lawns grow back on their own.

On a different path to encourage continued love of gardening, a client of mine decided to take things into her own hands. Her 3-year-old granddaughter was distressed that the pebbles the tyke planted in "Granny's garden" hadn't sprouted. Using twigs, broken jewelry pieces, shiny rocks from her floral arrangements and a glue gun, Grandma fashioned flowers to "grow" and planted them in the plot. The next day, the toddler's excitement when she witnessed the stone blooms was beyond priceless.

The entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well in California, yet another sign that no matter what the climatic changes, gardeners will find a way to survive the elements

to accomplish small tasks as if they were great and noble.



Elderberries are ripe and ready for jams, jellies, and wine making.



The climbing pink bower vine has made a full recovery after the winter freeze.



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CALL AN ARBORIST

The most common reason a tree owner calls an arborist is concern that something is wrong with a tree. It may be that some of the leaves are discolored, a branch has died, or perhaps the entire tree has been dropping leaves. Sometimes the cause of the concern is a minor problem that is easily explained and corrected. Other times the problem is more complex-with several underlining causes and a remedy that requires treatments extending over several years. Unfortunately, there are instances in which the problem has gone undetected for so long that the tree cannot be helped, and the only option is removal. If an arborist had been called earlier, perhaps the tree could have been saved.

So don't wait until it's too late, have a complete inspection by a Certified Arborist at Advance Tree Service and Landscaping.

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- **DIG** technology with the Easy Gardening Tips app from Suntory®. It's a digital magazine with tips on designing decks, summer canning, palette picking, and more. Download free at the App Store.
- **STAKE** tall gladiolus before they topple in the wind and protect from the deer who love to nibble the blooms.
- **TASTE** summer by mashing mint for garden fresh mojitos. Grow all mints in containers as mint is invasive. Can you and your friends drink that many juleps or mojitos?
- **LEARN** the difference between bees and yellow jackets. Bees feed all year long on the lavender and rosemary which require only rainwater, while the yellow jackets feed on your picnic or barbecue. Save the bees, call Vector Control for the yellow jackets: (925) 685-9301.
- **PERUSE** spring bulb catalogues to get your order in this month for fall delivery.
- **DEADHEAD** roses weekly to elongate the blooming season.
- **FILL** hummingbird feeders with a homemade concoction of boiled water with sugar. No need to add food coloring.
- **PRUNE** clematis sparingly after blooms are finished. Save the dark stems, cut away the light stems. Depending on your variety, clematis bloom on new, old, or a combination of the two woods.
- **ENROLL** in a free composting class through Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority at http://www.wastediversion.org/app_pages/view/1723.
- **ENHANCE** your interior space with an easy to care for plant that blooms for months. The "moth orchid," phalaenopsis likes bright indirect light and temperatures in the 65-80 degree range – perfect for summer indoors.