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Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for September

By Cynthia Brian



A side yard shaded by trees provides a cool place to play for pooch and people. Photos Cynthia Brian

delicious cooked over the grill.

As many of our annuals and perennials begin to wither, it's a great idea to gather bouquets to dry for the winter. Many plants dry naturally and others need to be hung. Before tying in bunches, remove the foliage and hang in a dry, cool place away from bright light. Garage beams make great drying racks.

Be alert for the pear, apple and grape harvests happening around the area. Become a farmer for a day. Volunteer for picking, pressing and stomping.

PRESS apples for the delicious fresh juice.

VISIT The National Heirloom Exposition, the "world's pure food fair," Sept. 8-10 at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds. Education about heirloom growing, sustainability, market farming, and risks of genetically modified foods will be the focus. Enjoy heritage poultry and livestock shows, giant pumpkin and vegetable contests, foot stomping music and tractors. www.theheirloomexpo.com.

BUY a deep soaker hose to give thirsty trees a good drink. If you see tree roots rising to the surface and leaves wilting or falling, get some H₂O to your trees.

DEAD HEAD roses and control powdery mildew with a spray consisting of 2 teaspoons cooking oil and 2 teaspoons baking soda mixed in a gallon of water.

CHECK out Cate's Garden premium bypass pruning shears and easy action ratchet pruning shears made from SK5 high carbon steel blades. These great garden tools have a lifetime warranty. www.catesgarden.com/vip

LOWER yard maintenance with ground covers such as sedum, lirioppe, succulents, creeping thyme, baby tears, and vinca major or minor.

PROTECT your tender plants, roses, and citrus from the hungry deer. They are especially destructive now as their food sources dwindle. There are few deer-proof plants, although my deer

"The sun does not shine for a few trees and flowers, but for the wide world's joy" - Henry Ward Beecher

We have definitely experienced ample sunshine this season and as summer simmers into its final month, we still have ample time to enjoy the warmth and tranquility of outdoor entertaining. September is often the hottest month of the year. Make sure that you are paying attention to the water needs of your trees. Because of the drought, you may lose some plants, but mature trees may be irreplaceable in your lifetime. Obey the EBMUD rules, water deeply twice a week, and your landscape will survive until the winter rains arrive. An El Nino is being predicted for 2016. If your ground is severely dry and compacted, you may suffer flooding as the water will not be able to penetrate the soil.

Nothing says "California" better than joining friends for a barbecue or roasting s'mores around a fire pit. (Be fire wise; Lamorinda is on high fire alert this year.) With vegetable gardens at their peak, fresh corn, squash, peppers and melons brushed with olive oil and sprinkled with herbs are

don't touch oleander, digitalis, bearded iris, naked ladies, heuchera, rosemary or Russian sage.

DESTROY any star thistle plants that may come up in your landscape. These very prickly weeds are difficult to get rid of once established. Seeds blow in from the hills. The cows and deer don't eat them.

DIVIDE iris, lilies and naked ladies. Replant in other barren areas or share with a friend.

PROVIDE a shady area for your pets to play and relax. Make it interesting and a cool place for you to unwind.

DRY herbs and flowers. Garlic, leeks, artichoke blossoms, Bird of Paradise, hydrangeas, sunflowers, bachelor buttons, sage, lavender and protea can be hung upside down from rafters in the garage.

STARE up at the clouds at sunset for a multihued moving performance. Do it with your kids or grandkids.

IMPROVE your soil with compost and mulch now. Compacted clay soil will experience severe run-off when winter rains arrive.

ATTEND the Pear and Wine Festival on Sept. 26 at Moraga Commons. Visit the Be the Star You Are! booth to receive a free brand new book as part of the literacy outreach project, "Read, Lead, Succeed!" Info: http://starstyleradio.net/Events/Entries/2015/9/26_Pear_%26_Wine_Festival_2015.html

Wine_Festival_2015.html

SELECT the perfect September bouquet at your local farmers' market as your garden displays wane.

SIT by a waterfall to enjoy the trickling falls and the sounds of silence.

SOW seeds of kale peas, kohlrabi, turnips and cabbage in preparation of a winter harvest.

I'm on my way to speak at the National Garden Symposium where I am looking forward to meeting other garden writers and media professionals who share my passion for nature. My October column will be blooming with the best ideas I glean from around the country.

Have fun in the sun and delight in the joy of our September trees, flowers, fruit and herbs.

Happy Gardening, Happy Growing!



New guinea primrose amidst Bird of Paradise withstand the hot temperatures.



A blue hydrangea will retain its hue when cut and dried.



Our container plants need more water now. Pictured deer-proof heuchera and ferns.



Dead head roses

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