

Cynthia Brian's Mid-month Gardening Tips

BUY bulbs on sale. Many nurseries and garden centers are selling bulbs 50-75 percent off retail because it is generally accepted that the planting is over. However, I plant bulbs through the end of January because our Mediterranean climate seems to keep the soil a bit warmer. Tulips are always a special treat, although we usually only get one to two years from a bulb. Alliums are a great choice because the deer won't eat them and the blooms are terrific as a cut flower. For the fragrant scent, nothing beats hyacinth; however always wear gloves when planting these bulbs as many people exhibit skin allergies to hyacinth. **MOW** your lawn only every two weeks in the winter with the mower at 3.5-inches.

SPREAD seeds of a cover crop to add nitrogen and nutrients to a vegetable plot.

DECORATE with tropical plants in varying sizes to dazzle and sparkle. The great thing about tropicals is how easy they are to grow and how long the blooms last. Read the instructions and enjoy the rainforest benefits.

SPRAY-paint end-of-season gourds and pumpkins with gold, silver or bronze for an entry arrangement with pinecones and evergreen branches.

DONATE to your favorite nonprofit for an end of year tax deduction while making the life of someone else more pleasant. Please consider our local youth 501(c)(3) charity, Be the Star You Are!®, www.BetheStarYouAre.org.

STAY healthy by eating fresh fruits and vegetables in season such as pomegranate, persimmon, oranges, tangerines, lemons, winter squash, kale, potatoes and lots of lettuces and herbs.

PACE yourself. Nature is slowly going to sleep and this gives gardeners a chance to revitalize, refresh, restore and renew. You've worked hard all year. Give yourself the gift of peace.

Wishing you a happy, healthy, and hallowed holiday month. Patience and peace be with you!

Happy growing! Happy gardening!



Spray painted gourds and mini pumpkins with pinecones inside a child's wheelbarrow.



The exotic golden shrimp plant can be found as an indoor tropical.