

Published August 8th, 2018

Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for August

By Cynthia Brian



Petunias, petunias, petunias - the favorite summer flower. Photos Cynthia Brian

thatched cottages were enlivened with baskets of purple petunias, blue, lavender and white lobelia, and geraniums. The Doolin pier boasted an old boat loaded with flowers in yellows, oranges and reds, while streets in Galway were lined with roses, agapanthus, verbena, astilbe, ivy, and even more petunias. Besides the exquisite flowers everywhere, I was enthralled by the doors that led to houses for the fairies and leprechauns that adorned many of the landscapes.

Whenever I travel, I gravitate to gardens. No matter where I am in our wondrous world, experiencing the spectacular floral creations of a nation is enchanting. Gardens relax, refresh, and energize me. I return to California excited to create something fresh and new.

For a friend who raises chickens, I designed a birthday arrangement that felt sunny and bright using firecracker plants, hollyhocks, roses, nasturtium, calendula, Italian berries, and sorrel stalks all gathered in a rooster teapot.

My Irish first-grade teacher always told me that she kept a leprechaun in her pocket. I was hoping to persuade her to allow her little friend to emigrate to California with me, but I guess I'll just have to make due with installing a fairy door on a tree and planting a few shamrocks.

This August as you travel, make sure to visit a few gardens and spend time exploring the towers of flowers at your destination. You'll find what you need.

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BE ALERT for smoke and wildfires. Clear debris from around your house, cut dry grasses and limbs, and be sure to pack an emergency go bag.

DONATE to California Fire Relief Efforts through Operation Disaster Relief. More information at <https://ow.ly/ks8A30lekGe>.

SPRAY roses for mildew and mites. Spray shaded crape myrtles for mildew and spray azaleas for thrip if necessary. Ask for organic sprays at your favorite garden center or nursery.

SCATTER Sluggo to kill snails and slugs.

JOIN A.S.I.D. (American Society of Interior Designers) and Janus et Cie for a Summer Garden Party in San Francisco in honor of my new book, "Growing with the Goddess Gardener," where you'll enjoy a flower arranging demonstration, elegant bites, cocktails, presentation and book signing. Info at <https://www.cynthiabrian.com/gardening>.

SOAK outdoor containers at least once weekly by allowing the water to fill the pots until water begins to drain from the bottom.

PROVIDE plenty of fresh water daily to pets during these hot months and feed them juicy summer fruits to enjoy such as watermelon, cantaloupe, blueberries and tomatoes.

PLAN for fall planting of water-thrifty plants including lavender, Plumbago, Black Eyed Susan, globe thistle and honeysuckle vine. You'll save on water bills for next year with these hardy perennials.

CREATE a beautiful arrangement straight from your summer garden with firecracker plants,

"A man travels the world over in search of what he needs and returns home to find it." ~ George Moore

Europe has been experiencing the highest temperatures of recent years causing major forest fires, crop losses, beach restrictions, and deaths from the simmering heat. In all the times I had visited Ireland since my teen years, the sun never shone. Yet recently when I visited the Emerald Isle to attend a wedding, spend time with my first-grade teacher, and embark on an overdue road trip with my childhood Irish pen pal, a heat wave was in full swing with temperatures in the high 90s. Dusk didn't arrive until at least 11 p.m. when both the moon and the sun shared the sky.

Although the countryside was dry and golden, almost resembling a California June landscape, Dublin was ablaze in flowers. Everywhere we walked towers of flowers adorned street corners, tubs hung from pubs overflowed with glorious blooms, while horns honked at me as I foolishly stepped into the street to photograph the beauty. Even the Guinness Storehouse boasted a soaring riser of cascading petunias in vibrant hues of red, pink and fuchsia. On the Aran Island of Inismor,

hollyhocks, roses, nasturtium, calendula, and any grasses or reeds.

DESIGN a tower of flowers by using a pyramid stand and hanging baskets or pots from it filled with your preferred plants. Petunias, lobelias, pelargoniums, spider plants, and any draping plant will look terrific.

GROW a butterfly buffet by planting a mix of flowers that will provide food and habitat for caterpillars and butterflies through the fall. Keep your garden insecticide and pesticide free to attract other pollinators. Food species for caterpillars include oak, cherry, willow, dandelion, clover and dill. For the butterfly, plant Echinacea, liatris, buddleia, agastache and achillea. Milkweed will provide both larval nutrition and nectar for the adults.

PREPARE for fall by ordering spring blooming bulbs including allium, grape hyacinth, tulip, daffodil, hyacinth and crocus.

GET a tetanus vaccine every 10 years. Sometimes called lockjaw, tetanus is a serious disease caused from bacteria found in soil, manure or dust. When humans get a cut or puncture, the bacteria may enter the body causing this serious infection.

CUT canes of blackberries back to the ground after harvesting.

MULCH when needed to maintain moisture and climate control.

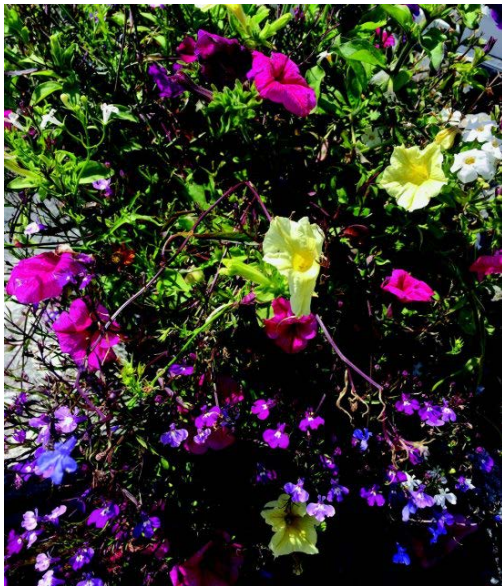
PICK peaches, tomatoes and zucchini as they ripen. Don't let fruit or vegetables rot on the ground.

TIE up vines that have become unruly or prune to a desired contour.

STAY cool by the pool and celebrate August under the stars on beautiful warm evenings.

No matter where we travel, it's always wonderful to come home. We love California living.

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing.



Yellow petunias anchor this flowing basket of pinks, and lavenders.



A field of blue agapanthus fronts pink oleanders.



A tower of flowers.



A small guest house flanked with ivy and astilbe.



In Galway, a tiny door leads to a house for leprechauns.



On a thatched cottage in the Aran Islands hang gorgeous baskets of blooms.



At Doolin pier in West Ireland, a boat of orange, yellow, and red greets visitors.



A birthday creation in a rooster teapot.



Cynthia Brian sits in an Irish garden with the full moon as the sun sets. Cynthia Brian, The Goddess Gardener, raised in the vineyards of Napa County, is a New York Times best-selling author, actor, radio personality, speaker, media and writing coach as well as the Founder and Executive Director of Be the Star You Are1(r) 501 c3. Tune into Cynthia's Radio show and order her books at www.StarStyleRadio.com. Buy a copy of the new book, *Growing with the Goddess Gardener*, at www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store. Available for hire for projects and lectures. Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com www.GoddessGardener.com

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[back](#)

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