

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Parks not pills



Create a bucolic space with a gazing ball, birdbaths, and birdhouse.

Photos Cynthia Brian

... continued from Page D1

To ward off aging, physicians in the Han dynasty suggested outdoor “frolicking exercises.” In the 19th and 20th centuries, people were instructed to visit the mountains to enjoy the “magic airs” or “take in the waters” at a mineral spring to mitigate a variety of infirmities.

Science supports the fact that exposure to natural stimuli, especially gardening, lowers blood pressure, bolsters immune systems, reduces the levels of stress hormones, improves our disposition, increases confidence, promotes healing, lessens inflammation, minimizes obesity problems, and decreases our dependence on pain medication.

Besides having fun, a brisk walk in the park three or four times a week may stave off cognitive impairment for older adults. For

kids, the exercise and fresh air of playing will help with maintaining a healthy weight as well as heighten their cognizance of the natural world. Community gardens offer people an opportunity to commune together to grow and harvest fresh food promoting better health.

Nature is a healer. For me, my garden is my happy place, my refuge, and my innovator. I get all my best ideas for my endeavors while outside listening, watching, tasting, feeling, exploring, experiencing, doing and being. Right outside my office, a beautiful redheaded house finch perches on my gurgling fountain singing his heart out daily. The frogs croaking, the buzzing bees, the wind in the palms, the scent of the star jasmine, the rustling magnolia leaves, the beauty of blossoms, the trickle of the water, the cooing of the doves and the chants of the quail activate

my imagination and soothe my soul. The repeated refrains of Mother Nature are my nurture and my medicine.

It won't be long before physicians everywhere will be writing prescriptions for parks instead of painkillers. Being in the outdoors inspires awe and wonder. We are blessed to have an abundance of open space, meadows, trails, mountains, and local parks where we can experience the tranquility and magic of the outdoors.

It's summer. Nature is calling. Get up, get out, and welcome the fresh air. Spend more time in a garden or a commons. See for yourself how you feel. Although I'm not a doctor, I am prescribing more parks instead of pills. There is no downside.

“All my hurts my garden spade can heal.” – Ralph Waldo Emerson



A dragonfly rests on a reed.