

## *Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian*

### **May flowers ... without the showers**



**A Western redbud is in full bloom.**

Photos Cynthia Brian

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After researchers spent time with children in Central Texas who had gardens and gardening classes at their schools, they discovered that the nutrition of both parents and children improved.

Also, those who participated began enjoying more vegetables.

If you are planning a vegetable patch, buy pint or quart size containers of your favorite vegetables. Don't attempt to plant everything you see at the nursery. Only plant what you and your family love. For example, for my spring veggie garden, I've planted nine varieties of tomatoes as I'm a tomato snob. I only eat tomatoes in season and prefer only tomatoes that I, a friend, or a family member grows. Also planted are eggplant, zucchini, cucumbers and peppers. Already growing are a plethora of herbs including basil, oregano, fennel, sage, thyme, dill, cilantro as well as leafy greens of arugula, sorrel, lettuce, and sugar snap peas, artichokes, onions, chives, strawberries and broccoli.

Make sure that you rotate your crops from year to year so as not to deplete the soil. Most summer vegetables require a minimum of six hours of sunlight. Read and follow the instructions that come with your plant.

Another beautiful, long-flowering, and excellent fresh-cut for arrangements is the dahlia. Although they are supposed to be deer-resistant, the deer that graze around my property seem to find them delicious. I don't advise dahlias to be planted in areas where you have marauders. Dahlias produce large, colorful blooms and are a welcome addition to any garden. Here's how to get them started in

your landscape:

1. Choose a well-drained area with plenty of sunlight.
2. Plant the tubers after the danger of frost have passed.
3. Dig a hole about a foot deep and amend with compost or potting soil.
4. Place the tuber flat and cover with the amended soil.
5. Make a patch of dahlias spaced 12-36 inches apart for maximum impact.
6. Water immediately.
7. After sprouting, pinch off the side buds to allow the central blowers to be larger.
8. Deadhead as flowers fade to maintain blooming.

Because of the arid times in which we are living, make sure to cut all tall wild grasses, trim limbs up from the ground six to 10 feet to prevent fire laddering, and clear a safety zone around your home. Clean out gutters, remove debris, be cautious when barbecuing and careful around the fire pit. Keep gardens irrigated, watering early in the morning or early in the evening. Be diligent and responsible to help prevent a fire from igniting. Pray for rain yet be prepared for drought.

Mother's Day is approaching and a welcome gift for mom can always be found in the garden. Consider a bubbling fountain, birdhouse, or colorful annuals to plant. Make a simple arrangement using flowers from the garden accompanied by a garden book that will be treasured always. Whatever you do, let your mom know how much she means to you whether it is through a virtual visit or an in-person brunch, picnic or walk. Moms love the little remembrances and deserve accolades, at least once a year!

Spring is the time to savor the beauty surrounding you. If you've ever been to Giverny in France, you will know that Monet was not exaggerating about his garden being his most beautiful work of art. He was inspired by nature and you can be too. Be an artist and create your masterpiece in your garden.

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing. Happy Mother's Day!



**A pretty Mother's Day arrangement of white roses, purple mums, berries, and eucalyptus leaves.**