

Lamorinda

OUR HOMES

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Lamorinda Home Sales

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Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Fall harvest and bulb buying



Photos Cynthia Brian

Trees are loaded with apples

By Cynthia Brian

"Tickle it with a hoe and it will laugh into a harvest." ~ English Saying

Every September I think about two major garden projects that transpire throughout the autumn season: harvesting and bulb buying.

Fall boasts a spectacular bounty of pears, Asian pears, grapes, apples, tomatoes, tangerines, blackberries, walnuts, kiwis, and more. The last of the peaches and nectarines

are being picked while festivals celebrating the end of the fruit and vegetable collections transpire throughout the next two months across the United States.

We also kick off fall by thinking about what bulbs we'll want to plant for spring. Alliums, daffodils, tulips, crocus, hyacinths, iris, snowdrops, muscari, and fritillaria top the lists of many gardeners.

Let's get started on this month's workload!

Fruit and Vegetables

What do we do with all the produce that is harvested? Besides eating your fruits and veggies fresh and raw, autumn is a plum time for canning, freezing, pickling, and drying the season's extra yield to enjoy during the winter months when "fresh-picked" is not possible. Use a dehydrator to dry apples, peaches, tomatoes, and pears. Put grapes into an ice-cube tray, add water, and make grape cubes that are pretty and delicious in drinks. After cooling, freeze batches of various fruit sauces that have simmered in a pot with a dash of salt, sugar, honey, and/or vinegar. For canning and pickling, check online sources for simple recipes and make sure to follow the safety requirements. Making jams, jellies, pies, and chutneys is easy and fun, especially when you involve the kids. Next to Christmas, harvest time was always a favorite family experience when I was growing up.

Although my vegetable garden did not return the abundance I had anticipated for the year, my fruit trees overcompensated. I've been slicing crunchy apples into salads, sauces, compotes, soups, and making crumbles, pies, and crisps. Peaches or nectarines with fresh cream is one of my favorite breakfast treats. For a refreshing and invigo-

rating weekend cocktail that I call "Sunday Sensation," try this beautiful and delicious combination. It can be made with or without alcohol.

Sunday Sensation recipe

In a clear pitcher, muddle cut pieces of peach and nectarine. Add slices of an orange, tangerine, and Meyer lemon. Stir in a shot glass of Campari or Aperol for an alcohol infused drink, add ice cubes, and top with sparkling wine or Champagne. For a virgin sensation, use a cup of orange juice topped with sparkling water or apple cider. Garnish with sprigs of basil and mint leaves. Yummy!

While you are enjoying your Sunday Sensation, it's time to contemplate the bulbs and rhizomes you'll plant this fall for a spring showcase. Bulbs can be planted mid to late fall in a sunny location with well-drained soil. Daffodils can be planted anytime and anywhere. ... continued on Page D10



Fresh peaches and nectarines on a hand-woven Masai basket from Kenya.