

# Lamorinda OUR HOMES

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*Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian*

## Plant parenthood



Yam growing in a jar is ready for transplanting. Photos Cynthia Brian

**By Cynthia Brian**

*"I recommend that all bachelors have a garden. It will give them the experience of being a parent." ~ Richard Goodman*

One time when I was the celebrity garden guest on an HGTV program, the discussion turned to relationships and family. My advice was like Richard Goodman. I announced that relationships and parenting are like gardening. They require being present, constant nurturing, detailed attention, consistent efforts, and sometimes sacrifice. If you can grow a plant, you can grow a relationship.

We parent for a lifetime. A garden is forever evolving.

Autumn is the best time to plant. The temperature is usually a bit cooler, yet the soil is warm. Hopefully, a bit of rain will also provide precipitation. During this season, I encourage more people to become plant parents. The secret is to get going now before the first frost.

There are so many easy and inexpensive ways to get started. You can grow in containers, on windowsills, even in cardboard boxes. You can buy seeds, bulbs, seedlings, or full-grown plants. Or you can get plants for free by propagating them yourself, with a little help from your friends.

If you are a beginner, start small so that you don't get discouraged. Since growing our own food is empowering and nutritious, perhaps start with containers of your favorite herbs or vegetables. Soil is the most important aspect of growing a successful garden. Great garden soil is full of organic matter and crumbles like cake in your hands. According to the Home Garden Seed Association, rich soil is the home of an array of organisms, bacteria, fungi and insects. It drains efficiently, yet it still retains essential water for the plants. They offer these tips to determine if your soil is ready to accommodate plants:

- 1) Take a handful of your garden soil and squeeze it. It should hold its shape. Then drop it. It should crumble. This is optimum.
- 2) If it stays in a ball or falls apart the second you open your hand, you need to add compost to correct the poor drainage. The point is to assist your soil in retaining water and nutrients. Work about three inches of compost into your existing soil, then try the experiment again.

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Cut ginger root with nubs into pieces to soak before planting.