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Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

By Cynthia Brian



Bougainvillea thrives in hot weather. Photos Cynthia Brian

"What dreadful hot weather we have. It keeps one in a continual state of inelegance." ~ Jane Austen

In July 1808 when Jane Austen was 33, the Central England Temperature series which dates back to 1659, recorded the second hottest month on record with temperatures around the country reaching between 97-105 degrees. Following this oppressive heat wave, a thunderstorm so violent that hail stones were up to a foot long, destroyed structures, and killed people and livestock.

I normally adore hot weather. In the past, I was one of those people that liked it hot. Then Labor Day weekend 2022 happened! Wow! Throughout the many years that I've lived in Lamorinda, I don't recall a time when temperatures reached 109. Friends in Southern California reported temperatures of 119 degrees. This excessive heat strained the power grids as people attempted to keep cool.

Throughout the United States and the world, horrific environmental tragedies are occurring including floods, fires, droughts, famines, heat waves, disappearing glaciers, and so much more with global warming and climate change accelerating. Scientists at UCLA and elsewhere are predicting a mega-storm in California in the next few decades that will be unlike anything anyone has ever experienced. They are calling it "the other BIG ONE" as it will be as destructive, deadly, and costly as any earthquake dumping over 100

inches of precipitation in non-stop atmospheric rivers throughout the state.

Yet today, suffering from extended heat and water scarcity, viewing our parched gardens, it's hard to imagine a winter super storm. As a lover of nature and Goddess Gardener, I am acutely aware of the crisis we face. It is prudent to prepare.

I am watering twice a week, less than the district water mandate of thrice per week. As I do my best to never waste a drop of H₂O, buckets are maintained in showers and sinks, sprinklers have been checked, leaking valves repaired, my garden has been mulched, trigger nozzles are attached to every hose, and the driveway and patio are swept. Despite these earnest efforts, the month has been challenging to keep landscaping alive.

You are not alone if your lawn is brown and crunchy. Mine is as well. I suggest applying enough water to keep the roots alive. When the rains come this winter (and let's pray we get them without the torrential atmospheric rivers that we experienced last season), and with a bit of fertilizer later in the fall, your lawn will bounce back. It is ugly now, so patience is required. If you are tired of battling growing a beautiful green lawn in a drought, make sure to contact the water district as there are rebates for replacing turf with sustainable, drought-resistant landscaping.

Proven Winners has just asked me to trial two of their newest developments,

Estrellita Little StarT Bouvardia and ChickletT Orange Trumpet Bush. I am always thrilled to test any new cultivar but because of the heat, I've asked them to not send the plant samples for a couple of weeks until the weather, hopefully, is cooler. If you are waiting to transplant, my suggestion is to postpone putting anything in the ground until the days are nippier, nights are warm, and rain is on the horizon. I currently have four big containers consisting of two avocado trees, a banana tree, and a red rose that need to be moved to their forever spot, yet I dare not attempt to replant them now. Last spring, I transplanted three avocado trees which perished during the summer heat even though I was attentive. Trees take three to five years to acclimate to their new environs. Timing the transition is tricky, yet imperative.

My "hot" news is that my first children's picture book, "No Barnyard Bullies," based on true stories from growing up on a farm and adopting and rehoming animals, is published. I will be selling and autographing the first edition at the Pear and Wine Festival at Moraga Commons Park in the Be the Star You Are! booth on Saturday, Sept. 24 from 11-3 p.m. Proceeds will benefit the arts, culture, and literacy charity empowering women, families, and youth. Our gratitude to Lamorinda Weekly and MB Jessee Painting for sponsoring the booth. Hope to see you there. For more information, visit Events at <https://www.bethestaryouare.org>.

In this late summer weather, we may feel inelegant and perhaps a bit dreadful. It's hot, hot, hot. But it could be worse like a flash flood or hail stones as big as a football. Stay cool, hydrated, and shaded.

Cynthia Brian's Mid-September Gardening Guide

- Autumn is less than two weeks away. It is time to buy the spring bulbs you wish to plant. Visit your local nursery or order from catalogs for your favorite blooms:

Van Engelen Dutch bulbs: www.vanengelen.com
John Scheepers beauty bulbs: www.johnscheepers.com
White Flower Farm: www.whiteflowerfarm.com
Spring Hill Nursery: www.springhillnursery.com
Breck's Direct from Holland: www.brecks.com

- Save Energy from 4 to 9 p.m. as extreme heat is straining California's grid.
 - Water containers daily if the soil is dry. Test by putting a pencil or stick a few inches into the pot. If the pencil comes out dry, it's time to water. If moist, skip it.
 - Climate emergencies are on the rise. Heed these warnings offered by Lamorinda emergency services:
 - Sign up for alerts on your smartphone with the Contra Costa County Community Warning System-
<https://alerts5.athoc.com/SelfService/CCCCWS/Register>
 - Include the CWS emergency notification number (925-655-0195) in your favorite contacts so you will receive messages when your phone is set to "do not disturb". For directions on how to do this visit-
<https://www.lamorindacert.org/resource/cell-phone-do-not-disturb/>
 - Know Your Zone! Contra Costa County is divided into evacuation zones. Knowing your zone will allow you to quickly identify your neighborhood's evacuation status and know when it's safe to return home. Find your zone here-<https://cwsalerts.com/know-your-zone/> Don't forget to save the information where you can find it in an emergency.
 - Review the Lamorinda Resident's Guide to Wildfire Preparedness and Evacuation.
<https://lamorindacert.org/evacuate/documents/LRGWPE.pdf>
 - Contact the water district to inquire about a rebate if you decide to replace your lawn with drought-resistant landscaping.
 - Deep-soak established trees, especially if signs of distress are evident. Deep-soaking prevents roots from rising to the soil surface.
 - Irrigate deeply early in the morning or as late as possible in the evening when the temperatures are cooler to minimize evaporation.
 - Refrain from planting any new plants during a heatwave. Wait until mid-fall or whenever the days become cooler, yet the soil is still warm.
 - Stay hydrated. Make sure your animals have plenty of water, too.
- Happy Gardening. Happy Growing.



The deep throat of the naked lady will wither in the heat. Photos Cynthia Brian



Despite the high temperatures, the garden is restful yet colorful. Photos Cynthia Brian



These containers are waiting to be transplanted once the rains begin. Photos Cynthia Brian



This sedum in bloom resembles pink shooting stars. Photos Cynthia Brian



In a shady location, yellow begonias shine.



Watermelon crape myrtle is spectacular on the tree but does not make a good cut flower.



Cynthia Brian on a warm sunset evening.

Cynthia Brian, The Goddess Gardener, is available for hire to help you prepare for your fall garden. Raised in the vineyards of Napa County, Cynthia 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 Are!r 501 c3. Tune into Cynthia's StarStyler Radio Broadcast at www.StarStyleRadio.com. Her newest children's picture book, No Barnyard Bullies, is available now. Buy copies of her books, www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store. Receive a FREE inspirational music DVD and special savings. For an invitation to hang out with Cynthia for fun virtual events, activities, conversations, and special perks, buy a StarStyler NFT at <https://StarStyleCommunity.com>

Hire Cynthia for writing projects, garden consults, and inspirational lectures.
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