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Begonias are not divas and require minimal deadheading or maintenance yet provide a blast of beauty. Tuberous or wax, double or single, large or tiny blooms, begonias are vibrant and spectacular, just like Barbie.

When it comes to a favorite tree with fluffy pink puffs, I imagine that Barbie's preferred summer sensation would be the Persian silk tree with its fabulous fern-like leaves. It is a messy tree dropping its seed pods in the fall so it needs to be planted in an area where tidiness is not required. Growing on my hillside where it gets very little water and has not been invasive, my Persian silk tree with its pretty pom pom blooms reminds me of exotic lands far, far away. Having been an airline pilot and an astronaut, Barbie loves to travel the world and beyond. As a suitable souvenir-rooted memento, the Persian silk tree checks all the boxes for

her adventures abroad.

What wouldn't Barbie want in her oasis? Although colorful, pretty, and long-blooming, Barbie most likely would shy away from the hardy ornamental oleander because of its toxicity. Barbie babysits often and has had over 40 pets, so she wouldn't want children or critters sampling this shrub. Traditionally used as a hedge or border, especially along freeways, oleander is one of the most poisonous plants. The entire plant can be deadly to humans and animals. The milky sap causes skin irritations. It is dangerous in fire-prone areas because burning oleander can cause smoke intoxication. Protective clothing is essential when working with oleander and it should never be disposed of in the compost pile.

Like me, Barbie would prepare now for fall by listing the bulbs she wants to buy for her spring garden. With their bright hues and graceful shapes, tulips would top her list, and naturally, she'd have a plethora of shades of pink.

It's been fun embracing my inner Barbie as I walk around my garden enjoying my personal passion for pink. Of course, I also adore blue, purple, and all the colors of the rainbow. As Claude Monet scribbled, "I feel the landscape. I can be bold and include every tone of blue and pink: it's enchanting, it's delicious."

Barbie, the movie, is a billion-dollar box office smash. My Barbie would make a laudable landscape architect. Her gardens would be as unique and unconventional as she is showcasing her diverse interests, imagination, and creativity. Delicious, enchanting, and pink!

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing. Happy Barbie Summer!



Cynthia Brian channels Barbie in her bright pink rose garden.

For more gardening advice for all seasons, check out Growing with the Goddess Gardener at <https://www.CynthiaBrian.com/books>. Raised in the vineyards of Napa County, Cynthia Brian 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!® 501 c3. Tune into Cynthia's StarStyle® Radio Broadcast at www.StarStyleRadio.com. Her newest children's picture book, Family Forever, from the series, Stella Bella's Barnyard Adventures is available for PRE-ORDERS now at <https://www.CynthiaBrian.com/online-store>. Hire Cynthia for writing projects, garden consults, and inspirational lectures. Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com <http://www.GoddessGardener.com>

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