

# Lamorinda

# OUR HOMES

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Handyman tips on caulking

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## Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

### Nature talks



A hedge of Bonica roses is vibrant with long-lasting blooms.



Passionflowers are delicate and fascinating. Photos Cynthia Brian

#### By Cynthia Brian

*“Stop, look, and listen. Nature is what you may be missing.” ~ Cynthia Brian*

When I was telling my husband that I had deep watered one of our magnolia trees, his response, was “Why did you do that? Don’t you think the tree had plenty of water this past winter?” I retorted, “If you drink three glasses of water on Saturday, don’t you think you’d be thirsty by Thursday?” It was an “aha” moment because he really thought that just because we had experienced a very wet winter, the trees were sufficiently satiated and wouldn’t need additional moisture in the summer. “You better write about this in your garden column,” he said.

And so, I will.

Probably like many people, my husband doesn’t know much about gardening or beneficial natural practices. Although he appreciates a beautiful landscape, he prefers to fill the green

bin with leaves and grass clippings, while I’m an advocate for composting the matter. He’ll pull a “stick” out of the ground believing that it is dead, whereas the peony was just dormant. We are forever engaged in a battle of the bins.

Having grown up on a farm and ranch, I have the advantage because I was taught to listen to the calls of nature from babyhood. My mother told me that when I was only a few weeks old, she would put me on a blanket under an orange tree canopy as she worked in the orchard. Evidently, I was mesmerized by the rustling leaves, babbled at the birds, and cooed at the changing light. My formative years encompassed a deep connection to the land that has trained me to respect and admire the natural world throughout my life.

Nature doesn’t communicate with humans in our language. But nature does indeed talk to us with its own language. By observing and understanding the cues in nature, humans gain

insights, knowledge, and inspiration. We must learn to utilize all our senses. The sounds we hear from the buzzing bees, the chirping birds, the gurgling creek, or the whirling wind convey information about the environment, species interactions, and weather conditions. The scents we smell are plants and animals communicating with one another about mating, territory marking, food availability, or even danger.

Nature gives us signals when plants, trees, shrubs, or flowers require essential resources. There are visual cues, physiological changes, and even interactions with the surrounding environment.

When addressing the needs of your garden, be aware of these signs:

1. Wilting. When plants lack water, as an adaptive response, their leaves or stems will droop, fold under, go limp, and even drop.

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