

Photos Cynthia Brian

## Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

# It's Eco-Optimism for the 2024 Garden Trends Report!



**Yellow cherry tomatoes continue to set blossoms and fruit.**

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We all need to be worried and stressed about climate change yet know that we can create solutions. As the trends study says, “stubborn optimism needs to motivate us daily because the future IS worth fighting for.” We can make a meaningful change.

Twenty-five years ago I founded the 501 c3 charity, Be the Star You Are!® (www.BetheStarYouAre.org) with a mission to empower women, families, and youth through increased literacy and positive media messages. Throughout this quarter of a century, I've had the honored opportunity of working with several generations. Gen Z is without a doubt the most climate-aware and the most willing to speak up and out. Because they will inherit the world that older generations have created, they want to make a difference now. And 52% of the world believes that Gen Z will find the answers.

How do you see the future and what are you



**When it rains, RainChains is a pretty and practical choice.**

going to do about it? Are you willing to pay more for sustainable products? Garden trends for 2024 will include terrariums and night gardens that shine in the starlight. Plants to pick will be more alien-looking, bright, variegated, and/or neon-hued. We will be encouraged to illuminate our gardens with glowing orbs. If weather permits, cosmic cocktails will be the new trendy concoction.

Will you delight in the darkness? Interestingly, cemeteries are becoming the hip hangouts, some across the United States offering movies, yoga, and horticultural therapy. In modern cemeteries, gravestones are also planters. Not a style that I embrace, this new trend is called Goth Gardening. Planting eerie, dark-hued plants are the norm as well as leaving gardens a bit untidy where withered and dying plants add to this dark, ghostly theme.

I fancy curating garden experiences with up-lit trees and plants. My statuary reflects a preference for angels rather than devils. When I create

memorial gardens for my loved ones who have gone to the great gardens beyond, I plant trees, shrubs, and flowers that remind me of them. My gregarious gardener mom's memorial garden area is called “Alice in Wonderland” and my farmer dad's is “Daddy's Outstanding in His Field.” Planting memorial gardens filled with plants that they grew and were fond of is a wonderful way to honor and remember their contribution to my life.

Bugging out is another trend. The National Gardening Survey saw a 10% increase in gardener's planting for bees, butterflies, and birds. More people are planting natives. How can you do your part? Plant early and late-blooming flowers. Bees need all the food they can get. Queens are the only bumblebees that survive winter. Without them, future generations will not exist.

Many weeds provide bees with important food sources. Piles of brush or other “messy” piles of rocks or shrubs add valuable backyard nesting habitat. Let the dandelions flourish in winter.

Don't disturb any nests that you may stumble upon.

### **A few winter notices from my garden:**

My yellow cherry tomato plants are still putting out flowers and creating delicious tomatoes so I'm letting them grow.

Roses are also still blooming and flourishing. I will do a hard pruning either at the end of the month or the beginning of February.

Potatoes are sprouting.

Every day I cut shoots of my baby arugula to add to salads. Yummy!

Bergenia (elephant ears) is my trusty pink-blooming plant in winter.

Apple trees are feeding humans, birds, and other animals. The most delicious apples ever!

When it rains, my rain chains have been a wonderful addition to my rooftop.

We will investigate more trends and data in the next Digging Deep column. Until then, I wish you, your family, friends, and colleagues, a simply wonderful 2024 with gratitude for your readership and optimism for the future from my immediate family to yours!

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing. Happy New Year!