

*Digging Deep***Color me purple**

By Cynthia Brian

"God gets mad if you walk by the color purple in a field somewhere and don't notice it." — Alice Walker, "The Color Purple"*Fragrant French lilac.*

Photos Cynthia Brian

As I amble through my April garden, I know that God is very happy. Purple, the color of royalty, wisdom and luxury is favored in the majority of my botanical blooms. The nobility of the season is highlighted with the elegantly perfumed lilac, the scented grace of cascading wisteria, and the pride of the dark and handsome hellebore as it changes from its deep shaded amethyst of winter to the violet and chartreuse of spring. Bees are swarming, sucking the sweet nectar from the fragrant flowers of lavender, freesia and the Chinese fringe. Shades of indigo, mauve, and sangria pepper the landscape offering a powerful presence yet calming expression.

*Chinese Fringe with its plum colored flowers.*

Purple bearded iris and Dutch iris tender their brilliance in the middle of the weed-filled hillside where Jerusalem star, also known as goat's beard, thrive. Bulbs and rhizomes are the ultimate VIPs of my garden. Once planted, I forget about them until they burst into bloom, a welcome surprise especially when other plants are failing. If you are a beginner gardener, I highly recommend indulging in bulbs for all seasons. Most require little maintenance and effort with minimal water while providing maximum results. Some of my perennial favorites that are available in hues of purple include calla lily, gladiolus, oriental lily, bearded iris, Asiatic lily, dahlia, anemone and naked lady. ... continued on page D17