

Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for April

SPLASH your barbecue grill with white vinegar then scrub with half an onion to clean the grates and get ready for outside dining.

BUFF your garden tools by plunging them in a five-gallon bucket of sand mixed with a cup of vegetable oil. The sand will keep them sharper and the oil wards off rust. Small hand tools can be stored in the sand bucket.

PLANT frost tender plants as the weather warms towards the end of the month. Ground covers, citrus, bougainvillea, and summer annuals are available for purchase.

SOW seeds of scarlet runner bean, sweet peas, or morning glories to climb on fences and wire.

RESIST cutting back the dying leaves of narcissi and daffodils. The fronds are gathering their nutrition for next year's blooms. Cut them back only when as dry as potato chips.

BAIT the snails and slugs, pick them off by hand, use copper barriers, or bowls of beer. These slimy crawlers will devour new seedlings.

BUY ladybugs from your nursery or garden center if you see aphids or other pests on your plants. Remember ladybugs fly to infested gardens.

VISIT the Be the Star You Are! booth at the Moraga Faire 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, May 13 to get a bag of complimentary spring potpourri. Bring your gardening questions and I'll be there to answer them. www.BetheStarYouAre.org/events.

SELECT appropriate plants in one- or two-gallon pots for your shade garden. Smaller sizes don't root as quickly. Hostas, ferns, vinca minor, anemones, begonias and impatiens mingle beautifully without much sunlight.

PLANT purple anything this spring and be delighted all year.

WEED, weed, weed. Because of the heavy rains this year, weeds are ubiquitous, yet easy to pull. If they don't have seed heads, add to your compost pile.

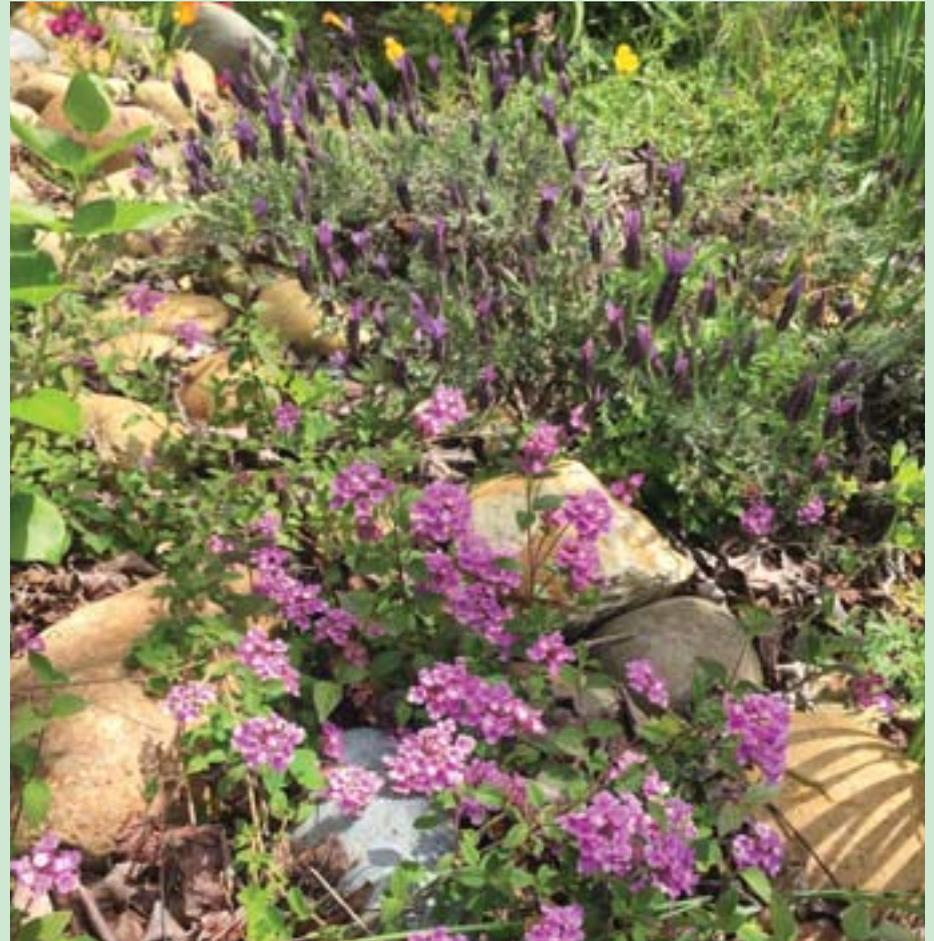
PREORDER my forthcoming garden book, "Growing with the Goddess Gardener," Book I in the Garden Shorts Series. All preorders will receive extra goodies such as heirloom seeds, bookmarks and more. Email me for details, Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com. Twenty-five percent of the proceeds benefit the 501c3 Be the Star You Are! charity.

Win \$50,000 for your Garden: As a judge in America's Best Gardener Contest, I encourage you to enter your best garden photo. The top prize is \$50,000. www.americas-bestgardener.com.

BUY a beautiful potted purple lavender plant to show your love for your mother or anyone's mom's on Mother's Day.

A heartfelt shout out to every mom! You are the nurturers and our teachers. Happy Mother's Day! Let it rain purple.

Happy Gardening and Happy Growing!



Lantana and lavender comingle in rock garden.



Purple vetch is a nitrogen-rich cover crop.