

Lamorinda OUR HOMES

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Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

Talking Dirt

By Cynthia Brian

You're not a realist unless you believe in miracles. ~Anwar Sadat



Star jasmine cascading over a rock border gives dimension to a garden.

Photos Cynthia Brian

The singular American summer festivity of Independence Day is a time for people to gather, celebrate, travel, and spend treasured moments with family and friends. Picnics, barbecues, swim parties, parades, concerts, and, of course, fireworks are the highlights of the Fourth. As homeowners prepare their patios, porches and backyards for the forthcoming celebrations of the summer season, I've been busy consulting with clients on how to improve their landscaping.

The number one problem in the gardens that I visit is the quality of the soil. Long ago my Daddy told me there is a difference between dirt and soil. We can be dirt rich and soil poor. Unfortunately, many gardens are filled with lots of dirt and very poor soil.

Mother Nature is a miracle worker, yet it's up to those of us who till to create the vision and set the groundwork for her to do her real work. In order to grow a healthy and beautiful garden, the richness of our soil is paramount. Just as we wouldn't build a house without first constructing a solid foundation, we can't plant a garden unless healthy soil is in place. Over the years, times of droughts or seasons of heavy rainfall deplete the nutrients in our soil.

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