

Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for October

Just hanging around

By Cynthia Brian

"Delicious autumn!" – George Eliot



A pole of pink and purple petunias shines brightly against the blue skyline.

Photos Cynthia Brian

The harvest of grapes, pears, figs and apples is in full swing. My ribier grape vine has twined its way into my crabapple tree and I now have a "grape tree" with succulent bunches hanging from branches. If we can keep the squirrels, rats, raccoons, rabbits and birds away, we will be picking pumpkins, winter squash, walnuts, olives, persimmons and pomegranates soon. The season of delicious and nutritious has arrived.

Besides the delectable edibles on the trees, vines, and in the garden, I find myself falling for hanging baskets of spectacular beauty. From the vineyards of Temecula in Southern California to the coastline towns on the Oregon coast, everywhere I travel I've witnessed glorious displays of cascading flowers. Hanging from pergolas, lampposts, balconies, porches and patios, these bloom-filled tubs trump the fern and spider plant baskets of bygone days. The prolific blooms of petunias, fuchsias, impatiens and verbena

extend the flowering season with a myriad of bright colors in purple, pink, white, blue and yellow. As long as the flowers are dead-headed when they are spent, the masses of blooms will continue to be stunning show stoppers until the first frost. Contrasting colors, bright foliage and appealing textures highlight these artistic, fashionable forms.

Even edibles work well in hanging baskets. Peas, strawberries, cherry tomatoes, nasturtiums and any herbs are great contributors. You can even mix and match with vegetables, flowers and herbs. Butterflies and hummingbirds will be constant visitors. For a no-care container, fill it with succulents. Hanging baskets are especially perfect for brightening small areas.

Creating a hanging masterpiece is quite simple and you can enjoy the beauty from spring until winter.

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Cascading pink petunias.

Suggested Bold Statements for Planting

Verbena
 Calibrachoa
 Cascading petunia
 Fuchsia
 Impatiens
 Lobelia
 Cyclamen
 Geranium
 Ivy
 Marigold
 Asparagus fern
 Sweet potato vine
 Begonia
 Vinca
 Heliotrope
 Schizanthus
 Viola
 Dianthus
 Osteospermum
 Coleus
 Sweet alyssum
 Bacopa
 Snapdragon
 New Guinea impatiens