

## Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for November

# Where there is smoke...

By Cynthia Brian

*"Count the fires by glowing flames, never by the ashes that fall.*

*Count your days by the golden hours, don't remember clouds at all.*

*Count the nights by stars, not shadows.*

*Count your life by smiles, not tears.*

*And with joy on every day, count your age by friends, not years."*

**H**ello November! We are grateful to welcome you.

With the devastating fires of the past month throughout California, our atmosphere has been filled with smoke and ash. The air quality has been so poor that we have been warned to stay indoors or wear N-95 rated masks when walking outside. Wildfire smoke and soot irritates eyes, skin, throat, nose, and lungs, and is especially dangerous for anyone with asthma or other respiratory illnesses.

But what effect does the smoke and debris have on our gardens?

Surprisingly, healthy plants have the ability to absorb the dangerous carbon dioxide and turn it into oxygen. Some landscapes may actually benefit from smoke as it diffuses the light allowing the shadows to be less intense under the top leaves of plants. The lower leaves then produce more food for the plant. Plants use carbon dioxide as a fertilizer, cleaning the chemicals and toxic particles in the air while restoring and cleansing our atmosphere.

Houseplants are extremely beneficial in cleaning our indoor air quality. They have the ability to reduce the effects of mold, dust, microbes, and volatile organic compounds. Spider plants, pothos, snake plant, spathiphyllum, philodendron, palms, and ficus benjamina are all easy to grow and work overtime to keep us breathing clean, fresh air.

Scientists are discovering the dire consequences of climate change not only on our physical wellbeing, but on our mental fitness as well. Disasters such as the catastrophic hurricanes, floods, earthquakes and fires have a dramatic negative impact on our health. We can help the environment as well as our families by maintaining a positive outlook and putting a smile on our face while we work together diligently to reduce our carbon footprint.

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Getting ready for Thanksgiving, a garden of pumpkins.

Photos Cynthia Brian



Grapevines will be dropping leaves soon.



Fall arrangement of clivia, roses and euphorbia.