

Cynthia Brian's April Gardening Guide

Weed, seed, feed

By Cynthia Brian

"Nothing is so beautiful as spring when weeds, in wheels, shoot long, and lovely, and lush ..." – Gerard Manley Hopkins



Dandelions in grass

While cleaning out our parents' ranch home I found a book published in 1918 belonging to my grandfather. The title is "The Herbalist" by Joseph E. Meyer, 1878-1950. The cover showcased a line drawing of an apothecary's garden. The first page warns in big bold letters "Special Attention: The botanical materials, medications, and recipes of this book are not intended to replace the services of physicians."

Being the major gardener and herbalist that I am, I was thrilled to discover this tiny tome filled with information that is pertinent over 100 years after publication to those of us who love to grow our own food. After reading about the anatomy of plants, the epitome of botany, and the medicinal uses of plants, I excitedly went into the garden to find weeds to feed me. Then of course, it was time to throw seeds to beautify what will become my late spring landscape.

Since the rain and hail we experienced in March, weeds are ubiquitous. Before seeding, weeding is essential. If you like to be adventurous while consuming a nutrition-



Mushrooms sprouting everywhere. Beware!

Photos Cynthia Brian

al boost, separate the dandelions from other discarded weeds. Dandelions originated in Greece and have been enjoyed as greens in salads or sautés for centuries. Dandelions provide calcium, vitamin K, vitamin A, E, riboflavin, and iron. The dried root is a beneficial home remedy as a diuretic, plus dandelions inhibit inflammation. Consider adding this food to your menu.

After a thorough weeding, it's time to seed the garden with beautiful flowers and delicious vegetables. Always choose quality seeds. Plant seeds in the correct light situations. Refer to seed packets for information when the most auspicious planting window is and where the plants will thrive. Make sure to prepare the soil properly by weeding and composting or buy good soil.

When planting indoors, choose a south or west-facing window to provide adequate light and warmth. Natural light is always best for helping seeds to sprout but you can always purchase grow lamps. Fluorescent tubes will work when placed two to four inches above the seedlings and left on for 18 hours per day. ... continued on next page