

Cynthia Brian's Gardener's Guide for September

Gardening at any age

By Cynthia Brian

"Old Gardeners never die, they just spade away!"



Echinacea is a favorite summer blooming perennial.

Photos Cynthia Brian

When my dad turned 60 he confided that he didn't have the physical strength that he'd had at 30. Although he was always Superman to me, Dad had to make accommodations to continue working uncompromisingly in the fields on our ranch as he aged.

Gardening and farming are bedfellows. Having worked in the dirt since I toddled, I have always felt confident in my gardening vigor whether it was lifting heavy rocks, pulling barbed wire, cutting limbs, digging holes, or carrying sacks of fertilizer. Over the decades, I have learned to curb my enthusiasm and ask for assistance when a task is beyond my physical prowess.

Gardening offers exercise for the body, mind and spirit. It is an outdoor activity that anybody can enjoy

from birth until death. By working in the garden, our bodies and bones become stronger and more flexible allowing for greater mobility. Gardening reduces stress, clears our minds, births creativity, and staves off depression. The bonus is we get to enjoy beautiful landscapes, gorgeous flowers, and fresh fruits, vegetables and herbs.

Here are a few tips I've gleaned that have been helpful to increase my gardening enjoyment while taking precautions for health and safety.

Health and safety tips for all ages

1. Always apply sunscreen before going outdoors.
2. Wear gloves, a hat and boots with good treads.
3. Although my preferred summer gardening wardrobe (and that of my family members) is wearing a bathing suit or shorts with my boots, it's best to

pull on trousers and a long shirt when pruning roses, blackberries, or doing any type of spraying.

4. Use insect repellent or wear a scarf and socks by Insect Shield® to keep the ticks, mosquitoes, and other pests from biting.
5. Get a tetanus shot every 10 years.
6. Seek medical attention immediately if allergic to bee or yellow jacket stings.
7. Respect physical limits. I push myself forward, but more gently.

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A luscious black Mission fig on the tree.