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Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

By Cynthia Brian



A bouquet of tulips and roses add spring joy to any room. Photo C. Brian

"We have it in our power to begin the world again." - Thomas Paine

What a difference a day makes! Who could have ever predicted that as the vernal equinox approached in the Northern Hemisphere the entire world would be mandated to stay home, pause, and practice social distancing?

Are you in compliance? As adults, we have the ability and the responsibility to be role models in keeping ourselves and our families safe and healthy whilst we are housebound. Thankfully, spring has sprung and our garden can be our protective sanctuary and our personal oasis. Although we can't share our gardens personally with others, we can go outside to exercise, dig in the dirt, and enjoy the beauty that surrounds us. It's time to develop our green thumbs as gardening is open and we have the time.

In the weeks since I've closed my StarStyler Productions LLC office to shelter in place, my garden has been my refuge and my workplace. Although I won't be consulting or coaching in person, I am working for hire via Skype, Zoom, and phone to offer assistance when needed. I've decided to reframe this crisis as a positive timeout to rebalance, readjust, rejuvenate and rest. Instead of rushing to cross items off my to-do list, I can pace myself and enjoy the process of weeding, sowing, planting, pruning, cleaning and repairing. The fruit trees in my orchard are gloriously full of blooms, while spring-flowering trees and shrubs are triumphant in their abundance of pretty petals. It's been a joy to stroll through the landscape shooting photos of the emerging rebirth. Every day something new sprouts and I am so grateful to be able to witness Mother Nature in action. Taking snips of branches in bloom and flowers unfurling, I am filling my indoor spaces with hope for a healthy future.

When one of my girlfriends, Nancy Roetzer, retired from school teaching, she began taking flower arranging classes through the adult center. Her bouquets and arrangements are inspired by her hikes in the woods and especially by the many waterfalls she has experienced. Her waterfall style floral design shows movement, flow and layering. Featured in this issue is a spectacular showstopper using tulips, roses, carnations, cushion spray chrysanthemums (*Dendranthema*), cone bush (*Leucadendron*), ferns, vines, and moss.

What a terrific idea to experiment with creating floral displays during these dark days! Whether we cut a few stems and add them to a whimsical vessel or decide to be more formal with our innovations, this is an opportune moment to get our ingenuity fueled and fired.

We do have it in our power to begin the world anew. Listen to and abide by the mandates of the experts. We may not be able to predict the course of the virus, but we do have agency over our actions and reactions. My April Gardening Guide provides a plethora of ideas to keep you occupied, safe, happy and healthy as we navigate the next month together and apart.

Enjoy the blossoms, bouquets, and the colorful photos of our developing spring, a reminder that life goes on. Gardening is not canceled.

Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for April

SOW seeds that will attract birds to your garden. Suggestions include coneflower, anise hyssop, bachelor's button, Mexican sunflower, cosmos and black-eyed Susan.

SHOOT photos of the abundant flowering trees including tulip magnolia, crabapple, peach, plum, prune, cherry, pear and apple.

CLEAN debris from berms and drainage ditches to prevent flooding. The soil and leaves can be added to your compost pile.

PULL weeds while the ground is soft.

PLAN your vegetable garden for the foods you love the most.

PLANT seeds of greens, beets, carrots and turnips now.

CUT a branch or two from your favorite flowering trees or shrubs. Redbuds, crabapple, plum, and peach are glorious in vases.

INTRODUCE plants that will make you smile. I planted sunflowers, sweet peas, nasturtiums and purple hyacinth bean.

TAKE a garden class online or watch YouTube videos with gardening tips.

MAKE teas and cocktails from herbs you grow including mint, rosemary, sage and fennel.

REPOT houseplants.

BOOST your immune system with a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, leafy greens, nuts and fatty fish. Adopt a Mediterranean style of eating.

WALK around your garden to admire the spring growth.

BUILD a planter box.

ORDER gardening books to read. Be inspired and motivated by "Chicken Soup for the Gardener's Soul," "Growing with the Goddess Gardener," and "Be the Star You Are! Millennials to Boomers" available at www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store.

INHALE the perfume of fragrant plants. Roses are blooming and fruit blossoms are delightful.

LOWER your stress by strolling alone in the outdoors amongst trees and on trails.

MEDITATE in your garden, or on your balcony, patio or porch.

LISTEN to the birds, frogs and insects as they begin their spring songs.

NOURISH your spirit by sitting by a fountain or pond.

EAT plenty of fresh citruses, especially homegrown, to increase your vitamin C intake. Oranges, tangelos, tangerines, grapefruit and lemons are ripe and ready for picking.

EXERCISE includes all gardening chores: raking sweeping, weeding, lifting, pruning, planting, digging, fertilizing, and chopping wood. Workout outside.

TAKE a nap and on a warm day, get your z's outside in the fresh air.

SHARE your garden skills with your children. Let them plant seeds of vegetables and herbs they want to eat.

FERTILIZE lawns. Lawn food is available at your local hardware store.

GROW your own bouquets. Create a stunning floral art with a variety of roses, stock, tulips, iris, calla lilies and mock orange.

BEE friendly by planting three or four types of native wildflowers to attract the honey gatherers as well as pest-resistant varieties of flowers, shrubs, trees and vegetables, thus eliminating pesticides. I've sown California poppies, lupines, bee balm, and morning glories.

WATCH the blossoms in the breeze float to the ground like snowflakes.

PREPARE your garden patches to sow seeds of potatoes, tomatoes, peppers and eggplant by rotating these crops. For best production, do not plant these in the same place every year.

ENJOY a peaceful Passover and Easter without an in-person gathering.

STAY informed about Covid-19 depending only on reliable information. Visit Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at <https://www.cdc.gov>;

The World Health Organization at <https://www.who.int>;

State Department: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/ea/covid-19-information.html>;

Contra Costa County Health Department at <https://www.coronavirus.cchealth.org>;

Contra Costa County Office at <https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/>

STAY POSITIVE!

STAY SAFE!

STAY HEALTHY!

STAY HOME!

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing.



Nancy Roetzer's "Waterfall" arrangement was inspired by the many waterfalls she's seen while hiking. Photo C. Brian



The dense white blooms on this prune tree forecast a hearty harvest.



Varieties of tulip magnolias are blooming at varying times.



Rich rose blossoms on a flowering purple plum tree.



Cut a branch from a Western Red Bud tree to brighten your kitchen.



Cynthia Brian outdoors on a cooler February day. Raised in the vineyards of Napa County, Cynthia Brian is a New York Times best-selling author, actor, radio personality, speaker, media and writing coach as well as the Founder and Executive Director of Be the Star You Are!r 501 c3. Tune into Cynthia's upbeat StarStyler Radio Broadcast at www.StarStyleRadio.com. Buy copies of her best-selling books, including, Chicken Soup for the Gardener's Soul, Growing with the Goddess Gardener, and Be the Star You Are! Millennials to Boomers at www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store. Hire Cynthia for writing projects and virtual garden consults or lectures. Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com www.GoddessGardener.com

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