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## Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

By Cynthia Brian



Arugula is easy to grow from seed. Photos Cynthia Brian

"Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever" - Mahatma Gandhi

I popped the crunchy pods of my just-picked sugar snap peas into my mouth as I uttered a prayer of gratitude for the food I grow to nourish my family and the gardens I cultivate to nourish my soul. The past few weeks have brought the fragility of life into focus amidst the mounting death toll from the pandemic and the anxiety aroused by the political rampages.

We need to return to our roots to savor the sweetness of life. For me, Mother Nature has always provided renewal and refreshment in her simplicity and order. When I'm feeling stressed, I go outside to walk, listen, see, smell, touch and taste . to reconnect with my senses and revive my spirit.

I picked a few stems of jonquil which are now sitting in a vase on my desk as I write this column filling my nostrils with their elegant perfume. My step increases its bounce as I taste the tangy citrus of my newly ripe Navel oranges. Back in my vegetable garden, arugula, sorrel, Swiss Chard, assorted greens, and beets await my culinary menus. Orange and yellow calendula flowers season my salads and the unusual hued flowers of osteospermum elevate my chi as they decorate my hillside.

My journal indicates that this week in January the roses are to be pruned. My bushes are still filled with buds and blooms that enhance the landscape and my heart. I will complete this task when it is colder next month. Beauty is required as a tonic for joyfulness.

Winter is a time to regroup, to rest, to repair, to rethink. Deciduous trees are now bare, an indication that work in the garden is winding down, at least for a month or so.

We can use this period to dream and decide what projects and plantings we may want to engage in throughout the year. What's on your list of things that you've always desired in your backyard but never had the time, money, or inclination to accomplish? A sampling of suggestions to fill your vision boards could include:

Planting a pollinator garden or a cutting garden;

Making a meditation meadow;

Rebuilding a patio or deck;

Erecting a retaining wall;

Growing vegetables, herbs, and fruits;

Retrofitting regions for relaxation and reading;

Adding a trellis, gate, arbor, or gazebo;

Creating compost piles or buying compost bins;

Improving a perennials plot;

Hanging hammocks for summer enjoyment;

Switching to succulents;

Increasing native populations;

Including a play structure;

Paving a path with gravel or crushed granite;

Installing a pond, fountain, waterfall, or other water feature;

Increasing your library of garden guides;

Removing a junk pile;

Stacking wood for a fireplace or firepit;

Enlarging bird habitats;

Replacing irrigation systems;

Reseeding lawns in spring;

Building a rain garden;

Starting a small vineyard;

Buying patio furniture and chaise lounges;

Planning a rock wall;

Assembling an animal enclosure;

Painting the fence; and

Shooting photos of your plants and the wildlife that visit.

Ideas are endless as we daily take time to pause, brainstorm, and learn something new. Foster enthusiasm for the new year by paying attention to the enrichment of the natural world.

Reawaken your senses and restore your passion. Design your future farm. Breathe!

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing.

Cynthia Brian's Mid-January Gardening Guide

? RECORD your landscaping escapades by writing in a garden journal online or in print. Your journals will track trends and seasons for the forthcoming years.

? CLEAN your garden tools in a bucket of vinegar and water for 20 minutes. Remove your tools and dip a sponge in a bowl of baking soda. Scrub off the rust.

? SPROUT onions and chives in your kitchen by cutting the greens, then putting the roots in a glass of water. Within a week you'll have fresh greens for your salads and soups. (Change the water daily.)

? START yams or sweet potatoes by rooting in a glass jar with water. This is a simple, fun growing opportunity for kids! When lush leaves emerge, it's time to plant outside to produce more yams or potatoes.

? REPLENISH bird feeders with nutritious seeds keeping our avian visitors nearby while supplementing their dietary requirements during the cold season.

? READ seed and bulb catalogs or magazines that feature gardens.

? HARVEST sugar snap peas, arugula, Swiss Chard, greens, and Brussels sprouts.

? REDUCE watering on houseplants as they rest for a winter's nap.

? RESOLVE to spend a minimum of 30 minutes per day outside. Studies indicated that every person needs at least 15 minutes of outdoor sunlight daily for necessary Vitamin D replenishment.

? REFRAIN from heavy pruning of your rose bushes until buds and blooms are finished.

? PLANT a container of aloe to use on burns and bites.

? RECONNECT and be renewed by nature.



A unique color for Osteospermum blooming in January. Photos Cynthia Brian



Close up of jonquil. One stem will perfume a room.



Yam growing in a glass jar can be planted in the garden.



Cynthia Brian, The Goddess Gardener, is available for hire to help you prepare for your spring garden. Raised in the vineyards of Napa County, Cynthia 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 StarStyler Radio Broadcast at [www.StarStyleRadio.com](http://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](http://www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store). Receive a FREE inspirational music DVD. Hire Cynthia for writing projects, garden consults, and inspirational lectures. [Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com](mailto:Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com) [www.GoddessGardener.com](http://www.GoddessGardener.com)

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