

Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

Technology in the Garden

By Cynthia Brian

“All through the long winter I dream of my garden.” – Helen Hayes

By now most of us have made resolutions for the New Year. We pledged to become more organized, lose weight, be kinder, and enjoy life more fully. I want to add to these lofty goals by suggesting that we become enlightened, technological gardeners.

For millenniums, most of the tools of our trade were simple – trowels, shovels, spades, pruning shears, saws, wheelbarrows, and buckets. Designs were constructed with paper, pencil, string, and chalk. Modernization brought us gas and electric conveniences including lawn mowers, blowers, hedge trimmers, chain saws, nightscaping, and automatic irrigation. When we needed to learn more, we'd head to the library, buy books, read newspapers and magazines, or go to our local nursery for advice. When we had a major problem, the county farm extension became our best friend. In the last 10 years, if we were computer literate, finding information via an Internet search was just a few keystrokes away.

This year, technology is making planning and growing easier. With a download to our smart phones,

gardeners can simply access apps that will answer most questions, introduce us to new species, diagnose problems, and create the ultimate landscape.

Are you ready to experiment using technology in the garden? Begin 2014 with a tech bang by checking out any of these phone apps for your garden. Some are not quite ready for prime time, but they are a good beginning. If you are not a gardener, this short list of apps may convince you that nature rules. And to sweeten the deal, these apps are all free!

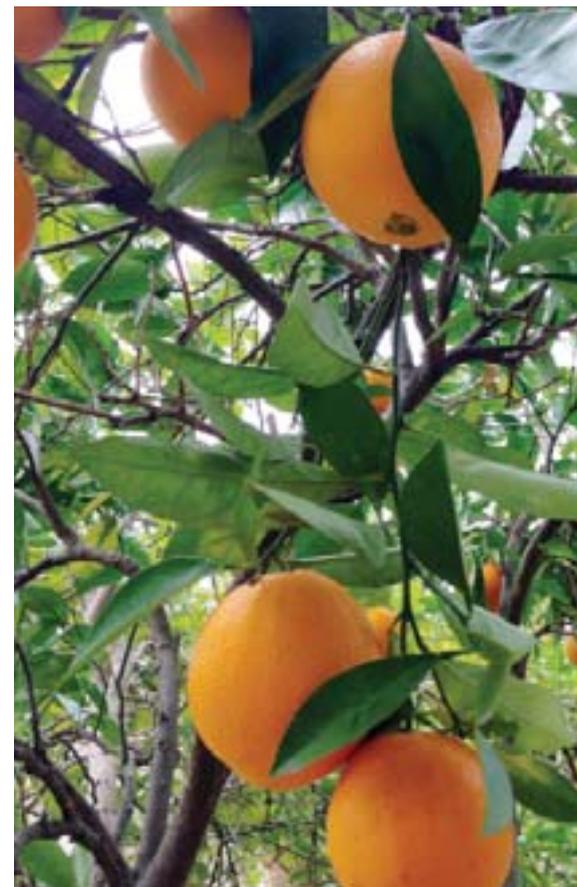
Garden Compass:

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/garden-compass-plant-disease/id605855033?mt=8>

This app allows you to shoot a picture of a pest or plant for submittal to a selective team of garden experts who will identify and provide specific product recommendations. This app is an easy way to solve a pesky problem.

Garden Minder:

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/gardenminder/id510434403?mt=8>



If they weren't damaged by the freeze, naval oranges will be ready to pick at the end of the month.



Walk around a pond during the month for a dose of inspiration.

Photos Cynthia Brian

Want to design the perfect raised bed for edibles? This all-in-one app offers lists of vegetables from A-Z with simple directions on when and how to plant and cultivate.

Garden Time Planner:

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/garden-time-planner/id594225389?mt=8>

Including annual flowers in the database, this tool from Burpee will show you when to sow and when to reap your vegetables and fruit specific to your region to ensure a hearty harvest.

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