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Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for February

By Cynthia Brian



Fuchsia colored cyclamen mixed with sky blue pansies adds cheer to a window box. Pansy flowers are edible, too. Photos Cynthia Brian

"It is Nature that causes all movement. " - Veda Vyasa, The Bhagavadgita The creeks are rushing, hillsides are saturated, lawns are green, and rain is in the forecast for the month. Our H2O dances and prayers resulted in an El Nino winter, much to our delight. People with swimming pools find themselves draining the overflows. If only we as individuals could save all this extra water! I no longer have buckets in my shower nor am I dumping dishwashing water in my potted plants. We are not wasting water in our household, but there is no need to collect every droplet as there was this past autumn as I have nowhere to toss the excess. In fact, I am diligent about making sure my outside container plants are not drowning. What a difference a month makes!

Narcissus, bergenia and daffodils are already spreading their sweet joy in our slumbering gardens. The cold of this winter will help trigger flower formation in peonies. If you are lucky enough to have a home in the snow country, peonies benefit from a thick blanket of snow. Camellias are blooming and rhododendrons are budding. Loquat and pear trees boast blossoms. Begonias, pansies and cyclamen add color and texture to our beds. Nature is on the move and we are the beneficiaries.

PICK navel oranges as they are ripening. Twist the orange and when it comes off the limb easily it's ready to eat. If the orange resists, let it stay on the tree a bit longer.

PROTECT lettuce from aphids naturally by planting alyssum as a border.

GROW pansies, cyclamen, and violets as a winter pick-me-up and to attract butterflies. Pick the edible flowers to adorn salads and desserts.

SPRINKLE a granular organic fertilizer around fruit trees. The rainy weather will aid with the absorption of the grains.

PROTECT frost tender plants from the cold, especially those in containers. We have at least 45 days

more of possible freezes. Frost blankets, canvas, tarps or cloth sheets will do the trick. Don't use plastic and be especially diligent with citrus.

DIG a ditch to divert water from rain gutters to your garden. It's best to line the swale with pebbles, gravel, or rocks to help filter the runoff and protect against flooding. These swales look great as dry creeks during the summer months.

HARVEST cabbage, chard, lettuces, arugula, and other greens as needed. Snip the tops of greens to encourage more growth.

PERUSE seed catalogues curled up on the couch with a cup of hot tea on a chilly, rainy day. You'll get ideas for new plants and learn a bit more about the growing seasons.

PLAN on planting a patch of wildflowers at the end of our rainy season. Wildflowers are easy and rewarding plus they come back year after year.

PRUNE your roses, vines and berry bushes through mid-February.

DESIGN your dream garden while the weather is wet in preparation for April and May planting.

PLAY in the mud. New research shows that when you dig in the soil, beneficial bacteria in the environment repopulate the community of bacteria on your skin, boosting your immune system. Get dirty. It's good for you!

SHOWER your beloved with red roses and baby's breath for Valentine's Day.

HIBERNATE. Our gardens are sleeping and so should we. Take time for yourself this February. Rest, relax, rejuvenate and replenish yourself. Move with Mother Nature.

NEED ideas to help you choose the right plants for your garden?

Consider these four selections for four different areas of your yard:

Plants for a Shady Area

Hosta

Foxglove

Ajuga

Hydrangea

Plants to Attract Butterflies and Hummingbirds

Coreopsis

Hibiscus

Creeping Phlox

Agastache

Plants that the Deer Don't Usually Eat

Bleeding Heart

Lavender

Iris

Naked Ladies

Plants for Sunny Areas

Daylily

Sage

Roses

Echinacea

If you want one-to-one assistance, email me to set up a garden consultation with hourly rates. I'll help your garden shine this spring.

Sending you love, blessings and virtual rose bouquets for a warm, romantic Valentine's celebration.

Happy Gardening! Happy Growing! Happy Love Day!

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I am available as a speaker, designer, and consultant.



A field of narcissi sweeten the air with their fragrance.



A begonia cascades over the container on the patio. Photos Cynthia Brian



It will be a great harvest for loquats this season based on the abundance of the blooms.



Cabbages, chard, and leafy greens are harvested all winter.

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