

# Lamorinda OUR HOMES

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*Feng Shui tips for winter*

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*Cynthia Brian's gardening guide for January*

## Yuletide yearnings

By Cynthia Brian

*"First say to yourself what you would be, and, then do what you have to do." ~Epictetus*



*A pink striped azalea looks like a post-holiday candy cane.*

*Photo Cynthia Brian*

As the holidays melt to a warm memory, we find ourselves gearing up for a new beginning. The number one New Year's resolution made by the majority of people has to do with fitness. Do you yearn to lose weight? Fit into a smaller size? Get stronger? Exercise more? Be happier?

Good news. The garden gym awaits your arrival. Gardening tasks qualify for a moderate to intense exercise program. If you are the type of person who wears a device to track your steps and your heart rate, you are in for a healthy surprise when you start gardening.

For the most powerful, full-body workout, get out your shovel and start digging. Other gardening chores that will give you positive results include weeding, planting, hoeing, seeding, watering, pulling hoses, pushing lawnmowers, pruning, carrying buckets and even harvesting your crops. Raking and trimming can burn 300 calories an hour. You'll tone your body and your mind.

I start each morning with a brisk walk around my property to inspect my plants, pull errant weeds and the occasional dandelions as well as check on my birdhouses, bird baths, bird feeders and fountains. As I breathe the clean morning air, this jaunt has become my daily meditation. Climbing the hill to the orchard gets my heart pumping and moving rocks that have tumbled in the night strengthens my arm muscles. After 30 minutes of invigoration, my mind is clear, my heart is open, my body feels nimble, and I'm ready to tackle the day.

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