

Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for July

TRIM dead leaves, stems, or flowers from indoor plants. Cut back to the stalk. By trimming, re-growth is stimulated.

WEAR gloves when working with okra, jalapenos and chilies to avoid itchy painful rashes. If you do get a reaction, make a paste of oatmeal mixed with water. Spread on the rash and let it dry. It won't be pretty but you'll get relief. This works well with poison oak as well.

CUT hydrangeas for a beautiful, long-lasting dried arrangement. My preferences are the deep pink or magenta blooms that dry to a bluish purple.

STOCK up on 2019 seed packets from Renee's Garden at a 50 percent discount now. <http://ow.ly/eYZE50uBDE5>

MAKE your own compost with food scraps (no meat products). Keep a covered plastic container in your refrigerator where you can toss egg shells, coffee grinds including paper filters, corks, tea bags, vegetable scraps, cut flowers, etc. Once a week, empty your container into a bin or pile in your garden and mix with leaves, shredded newspaper, and lawn clippings. Keep damp and turn with a pitchfork or shovel as often as possible. Within three months, you'll have rich compost to return to your garden beds.

APPLY sunscreen every two or three hours. Of the numerous ingredients in all sunscreens, the one that protects the most is zinc oxide.

SOOTH sunburns and heal wounds with the antibacterial property plant, aloe vera. Its gel-like substance contains vitamins, minerals, amino acids, and antioxidants that will suppress inflammation and relieve pain. Make sure to have a pot of aloe vera on your patio for emergencies.

WARM a chilly afternoon barbecue with a tabletop gas heater to eat al fresco.

SHOW your patriotism with homemade USA steppingstones.

HARVEST plums, cherries, mulberries, apricots, and whatever other fruit is ripening in your yard. If you don't grow your own, take a trip to a farm area back road to purchase fresh produce that is packed with nutrients. Wear practical clothing and shoes.

LOOK up into the night sky and count the stars!

CAUTION : Fire season has arrived. Always be careful and heed red flag warnings. In my last article, "Sip into Summer," I suggested you bring in the summer solstice with a traditionally controlled and safe bonfire. I did not intend to imply building a fire with open flames, but in a fire pit with a spark arrester. Gas fire pits are the norm. Building a bonfire is allowed on some beaches where starting a wildfire is not an issue. (www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue1308/Digging-Deep-with-Goddess-Gardener-Cynthia-Brian-Sip-into-summer.html) For more information on planting for firescaping for survival, visit <https://blog.voiceamerica.com/2019/05/21/firescaping-for-survival/>

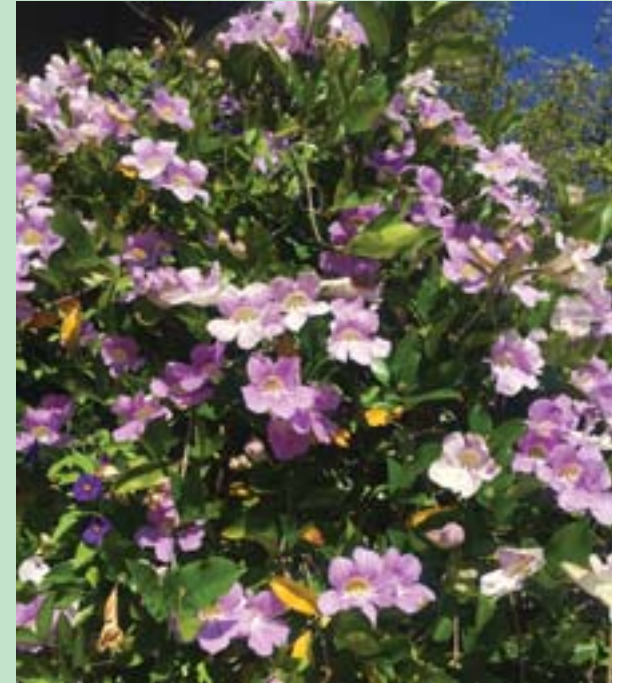
CELEBRATE a safe Fourth of July by enjoying an evening picnic while watching the local firework productions.

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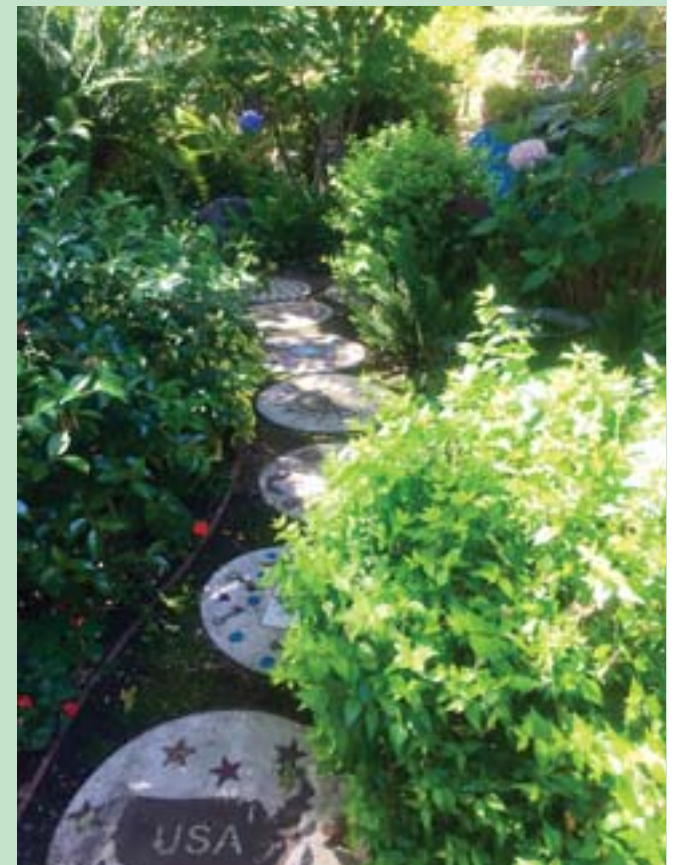
Happy Gardening. Happy Growing! Happy Independence Day!



Eggplant blossoms forecast a bountiful crop.



A purple trumpet vine attracts hummingbirds.



Show your love for America the Beautiful with USA stepping-stones.