

Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

Love grows in a garden



Sink your nose into the musky scent of Angel Face roses.

Photos Cynthia Brian

By Cynthia Brian

“The beauty of the season will grow wherever seeds of love are planted.” ~ Euripides

February derives from the Latin word *februa*, which means “to cleanse.” The Romans *fêted* *Februalia*, a month-long purification and atonement festival, annually occurring during the wettest and dreariest of days of the year. In California, February opens the floodgates of rain with weather that is overcast and cold.

Thankfully, not everything is dreary and gray. We attribute love to February with the celebration of Valentine’s Day and what better place to savor the “amour” than in the garden?

Take a walk in a garden where natural aromatherapy originated. Feel the spongy softness of cool moss as you step off the stone path. Admire the cymbidium orchids beginning to bloom. Sink your nose into a patch of narcissi or heavenly gardenias, inhaling the intoxicating perfumes. Cut a few stems of Angel Face roses with their heady musky scent to give to your partner or friend.

If you are stressed at work, a visit to the intensely fragrant flowers of jasmine will instantly settle your nerves. Is indigestion

bothering you after meals? Munch on peppermint leaves with your lunch. Do your children need to focus more on homework? Make a sachet of grapefruit peels, eucalyptus leaves, and rosemary sprigs to promote concentration. Are you having trouble sleeping at night? Pick a stem of fresh lavender, roll the leaves and flowers between your palms, and breathe in the vapors. All of these delightful therapies are available in the February landscape.

One of the season’s wondrous luscious gifts is the orange. Its folk name is “love fruit” because the orange is sweet and sensuous. The orange warms your heart, restores your sense of humor, bringing out your brighter personality. When you need a boost of confidence before an interview, presentation or audition, smell the peels from any citrus, especially orange or lemon. If you are feeling depressed or sad, inhaling the peels works as a mood-elevator to restore a sunny disposition. Despite the dismal weather, every time I hike up my hill to pick a radiant navel, I am renewed and refreshed with the sweet and tangy juices. Oranges offer a concentrated Vitamin C shower that pollinates a dampened spirit. Oranges and tangerines are

my elixirs. I cook with them, use the leaves, rinds and piths in teas as well as the flowers in salads. I create love sachets and toss the peels in my bathwater when my muscles are aching after a hard day’s work.

Since we have more time to dream indoors about gardening in February than actually going outside, this is a perfect month to do like the Romans: clear the clutter, cleanse your body, mind and soul, and tidy your garden in anticipation of spring. Peruse garden books and catalogs. Make a list of what you want to sow for your family’s enjoyment. When you start growing fresh healthy food, you’ll be showing your heart some love while saving trips to the grocery store. February is Heart Health Month, so experience increased vitamins, flavor and color while munching from your private Garden of Eden.

Life and love began in a garden. Love is not only in the air. Love is growing in your backyard. Discover the benefits of your personalized, organic Love Potion No. 9 and be blessed with the beauty and seeds of this season.

May cupid’s arrow remain in your heart all year and fill your days and nights with passion. Happy Valentine’s Day!



Yellow and white narcissi make a fragrant pocket posy bouquet.