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Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

By Cynthia Brian



The porch and patio were turned into an outdoor paradise with socially distanced tables. Photo Cynthia Brian

"We need to teach people that the environment has a direct bearing on our own benefit." ~ Dalai Lama

It's official. The Pfizer vaccine has received full and final approval by the FDA with the Moderna and Johnson and Johnson vaccines soon to follow. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention stated that if we want to spend time with people who don't live with us, outdoor activities are the safest choice. In these dire days of global crises, natural disasters, evacuations, and a highly infectious Delta variant, any positive news is appreciated.

At the beginning of summer, we all had high hopes that we would be able to emerge from our caves to enjoy a quasi-normal season. With the emergence of the Delta variant, it became clear that the pandemic will not be contained until most of the country prioritizes health and gets vaccinated. Humans are social beings and we like getting together. With warm weather predicted for the next two months, gathering in our gardens for a picnic, barbecue, or just a chat will be a safer method of

communing.

I recently attended an outdoor birthday party for a dear friend generously orchestrated by her adult children and their spouses. This was the first time since the pandemic began that I had gone to any non-family occasion. Although I was hesitant to be around a few dozen people, every precaution was taken to make guests feel safe and comfortable. Being informed that all guests had been fully vaccinated prompted me to R.S.V.P. "yes." The affair was colorful, fun, and secure. I came away with constructive ideas that we can all utilize to enjoy togetherness outside in our gardens during these challenging times.

How to have a more formal yet guarded, glorious garden gathering:

1. Prepare your patio.
 - a. Add colorful potted plants.
 - b. String lights, flags, garlands, or pennants.
 - c. Set up tables with fun placemats or tablecloths.
 - d. Space tables and chairs for appropriate social distancing.
 - e. Select throw pillows to add comfort and color.
2. Hang hummingbird feeders and birdhouses to attract the birds.
3. Create your scene with a theme and decorate accordingly.
4. Add a vase filled with flowers, branches, or fruit, preferably picked from your garden.
5. Design a thoughtful menu that allows you to be part of the party.
6. Have guests enter via a garden gate or other outside entrance.
7. Set up a "Covid" station with hand sanitizer and masks.
8. Ask that masks be worn when going indoors for any reason.
9. Make a playlist that fits your crowd.
10. If yellowjackets have been bothering your paradise, put up traps the day before your party and keep them in place throughout the event.
11. Invite the partygoers to tour your landscape.
12. Provide a "wow" moment with a special dessert.
13. Light contained candles or lanterns to flicker at dusk.
14. Send your guests home with a gift from the garden.

Being in a garden setting is always impressive to me. I relish being in nature, listening to the sounds, watching the birds, and appreciating the growing plants. I was especially impressed with the gigantic tomato plants my friend had grown from seed. A rock waterfall planted with abundant succulents echoed the theme. Joyful décor boasted multi-colored, elegant mats, runners, and tablecloths festooned with yarn pom pom ropes and a clear glass vase filled with lemons and fresh cut dahlias on each table. The "wow" factor was provided by the spectacular cupcakes that mimicked the succulents and flowers on the tables. These beautiful cupcakes designed by Sarah Thongnopneua of Baked Blooms in San Anselmo (www.bakedblooms.com) were almost too gorgeous to eat. They were devoured with enthusiasm. Each guest was gifted a small succulent reminiscent of those luscious cupcakes and perfect for our drought-parched soil.

When I came home, I found a small empty bird's nest on my porch. Have you ever closely inspected the intricacy of a bird's nest? What an architectural marvel. Wouldn't it be great to create a themed event around this wildlife discovery?

Now that the vaccines are receiving official approval and authorization, I hope that everyone will get

vaccinated without delay. Once that is achieved, we will be able to return to the freer glory days of party frivolity.

Fete the final days of summer with a casual gathering or formal gala. A setting in nature sets the tone for a festive, friendly, and safe celebration for the benefit of everyone.

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Saturday, Sept. 25, Be the Star You Are!r will participate in the first live event at the Pear and Wine Festival with a booth sponsored by the Lamorinda Weekly (www.Lamorindaweekly.com) and MB Jessee painting (www.MBJessee.com). Wear your mask and visit us! Details at www.bethestaryouare.org/copy-of-events



Cupcakes made to resemble succulents and dahlias by Sarah Thongnopneua of Baked Blooms In San Anselmo www.bakedblooms.com. Photo Cynthia Brian



The waterfall, birdhouse, pink geraniums, and multiple succulents echoed the party theme. Photo Cynthia Brian



A beautifully laid table for six with a drought-resistant succulent for each guest. Photo Cynthia Brian



A growing gray succulent may be the model for a cupcake topping. Photo Cynthia Brian



A round table with dahlias and lemons centerpiece and colorful table décor.



Goddess Gardener Cynthia Brian puts on make-up to attend the patio party

Cynthia Brian, The Goddess Gardener, is available for hire to help you prepare for your spring garden. Raised in the vineyards of Napa County, Cynthia is a New York Times best-selling author, actor, radio personality, speaker, media and writing coach as well as the Founder and Executive Director of Be the Star You Are!r 501 c3. Tune into Cynthia's StarStyler Radio Broadcast at www.StarStyleRadio.com. Buy copies of her books, including, Chicken Soup for the Gardener's Soul, Growing with the Goddess Gardener, and Be the Star You Are! www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store. Receive a FREE inspirational music DVD and special savings. Hire Cynthia for writing projects, garden consults, and inspirational lectures. Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com www.GoddessGardener.com

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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