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Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

By Cynthia Brian



Wait until flowers fade to prune azaleas with hand trimmers, not powered pruners. Photos Cynthia Brian

"Spring is the time of plans and projects." ~ Leo Tolstoy, Anna Karenina

No matter how many springs I've encountered, I am forever awed and amazed at the bursting of blossoms and the beauty of the lush landscapes. Every year I find myself reiterating how much I adore this wondrous season. A fever warms the air, one that encourages me to weed, seed, feed, plan and plant. Are you feeling this same urge to indulge in outdoor projects?

Before you go to your local nursery or garden center to shop, take photos of your yard and patio. Make a tentative plan of what projects you'd like to tackle. Peruse a catalog to find photos and descriptions of plants that you think will shine in your garden. Do you want to buy seed packets or are you planning on buying starts? It pays to know what plants grow best when seeds are scattered and what plants will do better when they are purchased either in six-packs, flats, gallons, or larger.

SOWING SEEDS

It is possible to buy seeds for almost any plant, however, not all seeds will sprout successfully. Over the years, I have found the following flowers, herbs, and vegetables do well when planted by seed.

Other than cherry tomatoes, I have never had success growing tomatoes from seed. Cucumber and zucchini have done better in my potagers by sowing starts. Most weeds are spread by seeds including the pretty when small, Herb Robert geranium. The aroma of this lime green weed with the tiny pink petal flowers is pleasing, but it needs to be pulled as soon as possible as it is invasive. A cover crop that I seed in fall is vetch. Vetch fixes nitrogen in the soil and is good in both sunny and shady locations, however, if not managed properly, you'll spend many hours untangling to dig it into the soil.

Before you depart for the nursery, write a list of what you are seeking, and know that once you arrive, your shopping dreams may take a deep detour. You'll be tempted by the magnificent selections the nursery offers. It's up to you to know the conditions of your landscape . where it is sunny, shady, rocky, moist, dry, flat or hilly. Will you be planting in containers or planting directly in the ground? Pay careful attention to the tags on the plants you are considering. They provide an enormous amount of useful information that can help you determine if this plant is correct for your garden. If there is a Q code, scan it to find out additional instructions. Buy only what you can put in the ground within two or three days. You don't want your new purchases to remain in pots longer than necessary. I am very guilty of buying too much at one time instead of making multiple trips.

Another important tip is to determine the container size of each flower, herb, vegetable, shrub, or tree that you will purchase. If you are a person that demands instant gratification and you don't want to wait for a specimen to grow to its full potential, or you don't have the time to let the plant grow, buy the largest container. You will pay a premium, but perhaps this purchase could be worth the extra cost to you to have immediate coverage. On the other hand, if you are the patient type as I am and time is not of the essence, purchase the smallest container. It will be less expensive and with time, your plant will be as large or larger than ones available in larger sizes. With annuals, it may behoove you to buy larger sizes, although I am a big fan of buying six-packs and flats. When buying a shrub of any size, look for full and dense leaf formation. Plant health is important. The pot should not be root bound. Healthy roots are white, not gray, or mushy.

I learned an important lesson in planting trees many years ago when I was designing my backyard. As my central focal point, I wanted a magnolia tree that boasts beautiful white blooms attractive to pollinators. I bought the biggest tree that I could find. It was approximately 10 feet tall in a huge container that was so heavy it took three people to manage it. I paid a fortune, but at the time, felt the cost assured me my desired outcome. That same week, my mother gave me a six-inch tall sapling in a quart pot. I planted it at the back of my garden, believing that it would never become a large tree. Within three years, both trees were the exact same size, and now, three decades later, my mother's magnolia gift is double the size of my purchase. Both are beautiful, but the free sapling is dramatic!

Easter and Passover arrive with spectacular spring showers of flowers highlighted by tulips, wisteria, bluebells, azaleas, flowering trees, and the fruity fragrances of lilac, hyacinth, and jasmine. Pick a bouquet from your garden to celebrate these sacred holidays.

No matter whether you spring into spring with seeds or starts, just do it!

FREE APRIL EVENTS NOT TO BE MISSED

Honor Mother Earth on Friday, April 22 by tuning in to the Earth Gratitude Virtual Festival live-streamed at <https://www.unify.org>. Two of my Be the Star You Are!r volunteers who are reporters on Express Yourself!T Teen Radio as well as myself have featured videos. Esteemed contributors include the Dalai Lama, Jane Goodall, Prince Charles, Elon Musk, Deepak Chopra, and others. Together we will celebrate our planet.

On Saturday, April 23 at noon, enjoy a free Virtual Wonders Magic Show crafted for the entire family with a renowned Irish magician. Although the interactive show is free, you do have to register to receive the ZOOM link. More info at <https://www.BetheStarYouAre.org>. Or email thestarsworkshop@gmail.com?

Wishing you a hippity hoppity Easter and a peaceful Passover. Enjoy an amazing April with your family.

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing. Stand in Solidarity with Ukraine.



A view of cascading wisteria from a pergola. Photos Cynthia Brian



Birds have been eating the buds of this Queen Anne cherry tree. Photos Cynthia Brian



A yellow tulip is a symbol of solidarity for Ukraine, and a happy Easter and Passover. Photos Cynthia Brian



Spring is scented by lovely lilacs. Photos Cynthia Brian



Nigella, AKA Love in the Mist, spreads by seed.



Dig vetch into the soil to add nitrogen.



Cynthia Brian and her granddaughter play with their Easter bunny.

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.

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