

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian **Spring shopping: Seeds or starts?**



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

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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



A yellow tulip is a symbol of solidarity for Ukraine...and a happy Easter and Passover.

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



Photos Cynthia Brian

Spring is scented by lovely lilacs.

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.

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