

# Lamorinda

# OUR HOMES

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Creating a magical holiday season

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*Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian*

## Nature's ornaments



Christmas ornaments decorate Japanese maples. Photo Cynthia Brian

**By Cynthia Brian**

*"There is material enough in a single flower for the ornaments of a score of cathedrals." ~ John Ruskin*

Like so many Americans, the day after Thanksgiving I pulled out my stored Christmas décor. I'm not one to shop on Black Friday, preferring not to fight the crowds for sale items that I don't need. Instead, I chose to bask in the deliciousness of autumn by spending time meandering around my garden with my adopted animals in tow, deciding where to display my holiday treasures. It was a beautiful clear, warm day with a gentle breeze that tickled the leaves to fall like feathers. Songbirds caroled as hawks circled above in the air currents. As I inhaled the fragrance of pine needles, I exhaled joy and gratitude for such natural splendor.

What I realized was that Mother Nature had already decorated my landscape for the holidays with colorful leaves carpeting the

flower beds and blooming white chrysanthemums imitating snow. The merry berry bushes of nandina, cotoneaster, and pyracantha were chock full of fiery red fruit favored by wildlife. Hachiya persimmons resembled bright orange ornaments hanging from the near-bare branches. I mistook a lone red pomegranate hanging from the golden-leaved tree for a crimson Christmas bulb. Sprays of yellow Meyer lemons glowed like sunshine, while azalea bushes sported leaves in rainbow hues. I climbed the hillside steps to marvel at the multitude of cherry-pink pistache berries flanked by the redwood tree that the squirrels had not devoured this year. In the foreground, my weather-vane of a prancing deer reminded me of Dancer flying through the night sky.

I hung gold and red giant ornaments on my Japanese Maples. They glistened in the afternoon glare, yet these trinkets made by humans could not compare to what Mother Nature had already designed.

Many people seek a Christmas tree or Hanukkah bush to brighten their homes in December. Every tree is a perfect tree, even those Charlie Brown ones, especially if a child chooses. If possible, buy a living tree that can be placed on your patio after the holidays are over this year and be reused for the next festivity.

When considering trees, it's essential to also think about safety. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, last year over 15,000 people ended up in the emergency room due to decorating falls, burns, cuts, strains, and electrical shocks.



Colorful maple leaves on the ground.

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