

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Plant Poetry

By Cynthia Brian



View of the meadow garden after weeding.

Photos Cynthia Brian

“Once the relation between poetry and the soil is established in the mind, all growing things are endowed with more than material beauty.” Elizabeth Lawrence

Have you ever wandered your garden and realized the growing landscape is poetry in motion? As you’ve read in my recent columns, I have been occupied with aggressive hand-weeding on my land these past several months. Under the masses of foxtails, thistles, spurge, bindweed, black medic, pelargonium robertianum, hemlock, and wild grasses, fields of flowers awaited the sunshine. With only three garden rooms left in my quest to purge the pernicious invaders, my first round of weeding is almost at an end.

The plant poetry has begun. My orchard meadow is glorious with swaths of wildflowers, including golden poppies, sprouted seeds of calendula, nigella, seafoam statice, nasturtiums, blooming cornflowers, iris, geranium, roses, chamomile, lilies, acanthus, strawberry, bougainvillea, and more. My orchard is brim-

ming with fruit trees that will ripen throughout the season. Apricots, cherries, peaches, plums, prunes, mulberries, apples, Asian Pears, elderberries, persimmons, pomegranates, guavas, loquats, figs, and vines of grapes provide edible delights for our household and the wildlife who frequent the meadow. I recently planted a banana tree and two avocados, keeping my fingers crossed that they will bear fruit in a few years. Footsteps away is my citrus grove, with tangerines, oranges, tangelos, lemons, and kumquats. The hillside is a vibrant, pollinator paradise. Bees and bumblebees especially favor the blue nigella, buzzing from blossom to blossom, savoring the sweet nectar. Butterflies and birds flutter and fly through this heavenly fragrant celebration of color, scale, and texture. When I view photos from a month ago -- when this area was blanketed in suffocating weeds -- I am grateful for the miracle of nature, this poetic painting abundant with stunning flowers.

The paths are filled with gravel and lined with recycled redwood planks rescued from a

renewed deck -- both a clever, sustainable, and frugal option. Like the balance of a colorful poem, this design is wild yet civilized, celebrating the quirks of nature.

Another poetic surprise in my garden this week was the blooming of my cordyline, also known as the Ti plant. One day when I went out for my daily garden walk, iridescent shoots had sprung out of the top of this good-luck tree, glittering in the morning sun. I also harvested the first of my zucchini, which was exciting because last summer my plants were eaten by critters. Cascading over the raised bed in my vegetable garden, edible and tangy nasturtium in red, yellow, and orange shades reminds me of my Nonna’s garden. Not to be outdone, my Bonica rose bush drapes over the mailbox with voluminous baby pink blooms flanked by fluorescent fuchsia corn flags, creating a mesmerizing entrance.

Each day promises something new and exciting. Plant poetry is indeed endowed with more than material beauty.



A gravel path outlines a border of seafoam statice and calendulas.