

# In the Back Yard

## Digging Deep—Cynthia's Garden Vacation

By Cynthia Brian



"The main purpose of a garden is to give its owner the best and highest kind of earthly pleasure." Gertrude Jekyll

champagne to help us christen our new outdoor kitchen," my neighbor emailed me this past weekend. What a beautiful addition to their already gorgeous garden! We sipped

the bubbly and nibbled on appetizers while enjoying the sun setting over their luscious landscape, "I feel like I'm on holiday in your backyard!" I cheerfully exclaimed.

Today homeowners are realizing the value of creating inviting outdoor places. Living space is increased through the creation of outdoor rooms, especially with the beautiful weather we experience here in California. Changes in taste and technology have extended style and luxury to our outdoor furnishings. It's a way to bring our interiors outside while designing a leisurely sanctuary in the midst of a hectic life.

The building blocks for outdoor furnishings include woods, metals, rattan, wicker, stone, and fabric. The key is to utilize materials that are weather resistant, durable, and attractive. As with all design, you want your outdoor rooms to be functional, balanced, and easy to clean.

Over the years I've designed many outdoor spaces where I could have easily spent a vacation. Making sure that the fabrics, textures, and designs mimic and compliment the home and garden is essential for

the area to flow comfortably. In my own backyard, I've incorporated patios, terraces, paths, water features, bird baths, feeders, picnic areas, hammocks, and fanciful art into my garden schemes. Although I travel extensively lecturing around the world, my garden is always my very favorite vacation locale. Where else can I watch wildlife, swim, nap, barbecue, spa, read, write, play, weed, gather fresh vegetables, fruits, and flowers yet still dream from the comfort of my own bed?

This August as the world travels to a distant environment to get away from it all, I'm gong on vacation at home in my backyard where we have it all. The champagne is on ice. Salute!

Happy Gardening to you from the Ultimate Mom Gardener, Cynthia Brian. [cynthia@starstyle.com](mailto:cynthia@starstyle.com), [www.GardeningwithCynthia.com](http://www.GardeningwithCynthia.com)



### Cynthia's Digging Deep Garden Guide for August

"Gardeners, I think, dream bigger dreams than emperors." Mary Cantwell

Our warmest summer month and the time to enjoy the fruits of our labors. The vegetables are abundant. Plants are in their glory. Nothing tastes sweeter than home-grown tomatoes, corn, nectarines, peaches, and pears. Keep everything thoroughly watered so that vegetables and fruit mature properly, lawns are kept green and flowering plants bloom profusely. Lots of outdoor entertaining and lounging around the yard and pool are in order. The birds, bees, butterflies are in profusion if you have been maintaining a healthy garden! All of nature seems to be singing the praises of high summer.

- LAWN mower blades need to be set to the highest position so than grass roots are shaded from the hot August sunshine.
- WATER deeply, especially lawns. Short, frequent watering cycles are not useful.
- PRUNE suckers that grow from trunks of trees and roses. They zap the strength of the mother plant and if not pruned will kill the rootstock.
- DEADHEAD summer annuals and perennials for a burst of fall color. Be careful to leave some foliage as photosynthesis is still in process to nourish the plant for the upcoming winter.
- CLIP roses for sprays of beauty and fragrance for both indoor and outdoor entertainment.
- HARVEST fruits and vegetables, especially beets, potatoes, strawberries, corn, tomatoes and zucchini.
- PICK herbs in the morning, use fresh or dry upside down in a cool dark room for later culinary needs.
- HUNT for snails and slugs by flashlight at night or drown them in left-over beer from your barbeque!
- RAKE any fallen leaves, remove diseased stems and leaves from plants.
- BUY a golden finch sock, fill with thistle seed and enjoy the show!
- FIRE up your barbecue, invite your friends and neighbors, and grill some of your homegrown or farmer's market produce. Besides vegetables, peaches, pears, nectarines and plums are delicious hot from the coals drizzled with honey.
- SWING in your hammock, dream the dreams of kings and queens.

May the sun shine in your garden and the stars in your heart.



### City of Orinda Launches New Website—[www.cityoforinda.org](http://www.cityoforinda.org)

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A photo banner of city landmarks—including the library, the theater, City Hall, a hillside view,

and a school walkway—traverses the homepage reflecting Orinda's beauty and character. "We wanted the website to show what it is like to live in Orinda and how people feel when they come here," says Pacheco. The website's color scheme mirrors the look of Orinda's landscape employing the same earth tones; such as green, terra cotta, and brown, that are evident in the hills surrounding and buildings throughout the city.

Providing meeting information is one of the key functions of the website notes Pacheco. The new website has a calendar of meeting events on the homepage and provides easier access to agendas and minutes," she adds. "We broke the government section into a few parts to separate the Council activities from the various committees and commissions that have grown in number and activity," she adds. And, to communicate (via email) with a Council member or city employee is as easy as point and click.

"The City Council and our numerous citizen commissions need residents' participation to be a truly representative government," notes Glazer. "With only a few clicks on your computer you can read the who, what, where and why on almost any matter coming to the

City Council."

Although the new website has been updated, launched and is running smoothly, Pacheco believes that it will continue to evolve and grow. "It is my hope that the City's website can continue to be improved so that it can be the source of all things Orinda," adds Glazer. "I hope we can find ways to provide expanded links to civic organizations and businesses."

Pacheco explains that the website will be an important source of information during emergencies. "Phone lines get flooded quickly," she states. "The News and Updates section on the homepage will be on of the first places where information is posted during an emergency."

However, in this age of e-news, email, and e-everything, Glazer points out, "The City Council and City Staff continue to provide written information to residents who don't have access to a computer. No one should be left out of the information loop if they don't have access to our website. Committee agendas, minutes, and city policies can still be requested by calling the City at 253-4200."

To check out the City of Orinda's website go to [www.cityoforinda.org](http://www.cityoforinda.org).

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