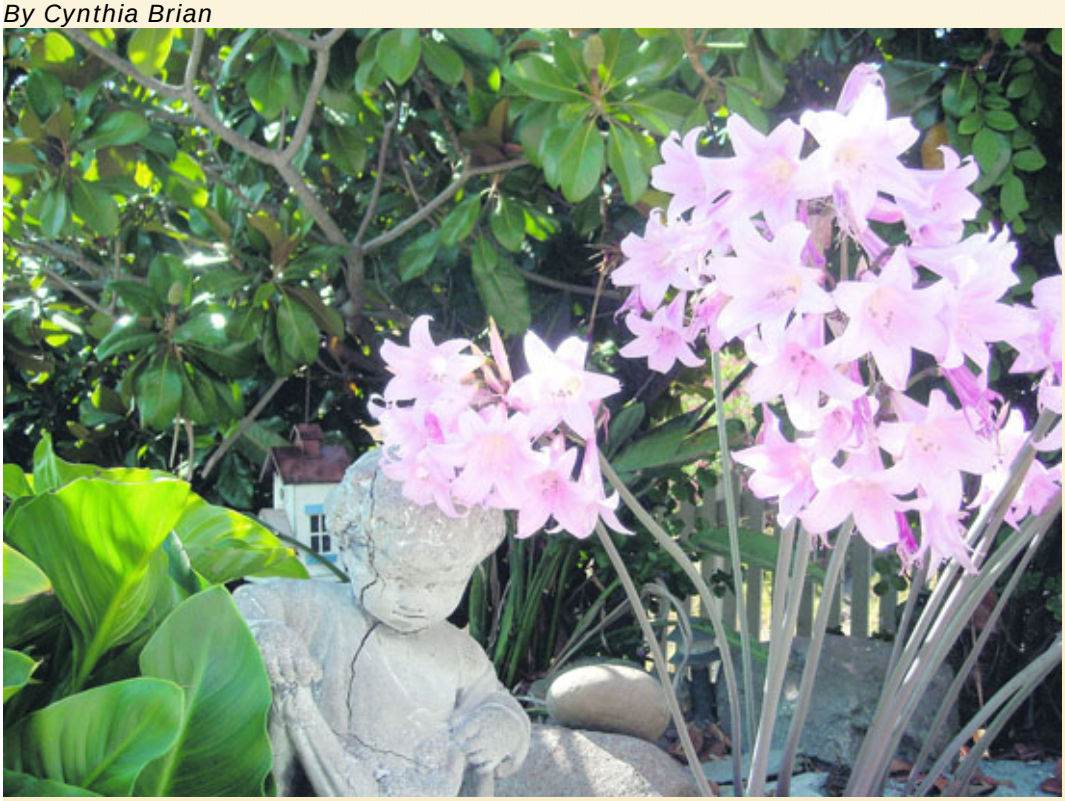
LAMORINDA WEEKLY



**Published September 3, 2008**

# Digging Deep-Cynthia's September Remember

*By Cynthia Brian*



September has always been a special month for me. My husband and I were married on a very hot Saturday celebrating with hundreds of our closest friends and large Italian family in the vineyard gardens of our Napa County home. For months before the big day, my mom labored planting flowers in our matrimonial colors-aqua, rose, and lavender. Tables were festooned with grapes and gardenias, arbors boasted pink bower vines, the turquoise water of the swimming pool was afloat with a kaleidoscope of pink hued roses atop candle wreaths while the house was swathed in bright blooming bougainvilleas. The magnificent grounds were a vision directly borrowed from Monet's garden palette. Which gets me to the question I'm often asked in the fall. Should we only plant colors of crimson, yellow, and orange for autumn color? My answer for all seasons is to plant the colors you love. Plant what will thrive in your area while making your home sparkle and shine. There are no rules except those you personally choose as nature arrives with colors of the rainbow. The secret to creating a cohesive garden is to bring the indoors out and the outdoors in. In other words, just like you would design an inside room, design your outdoor spaces to soothe and nurture you, allowing the inside and outside to flow together seamlessly. Utilizing similar color schemes in your interiors to those of your exterior landscapes creates a sense of calm and increases your personal space. To this day, my favorite decorating colors are still pinks, purples, and blues. As I wander through my glorious gardens picking grapes while inhaling the sweet scent of Angel Face roses, I am transported back to that

glorious day so many years ago when we said, "I do" and sang "Color My World." With love, I realize I have created my very own Monet garden. Now, on to other stellar September musings. Do you remember the song by The Association, "See you in September?" It was a heart bleeding song about the fear of losing your current flame to a summer love. Towards the end of summer I always find myself singing the melody as I reminisce about summer bliss, wondering what new delights September will bring. The kids are back in school. Swim team meets are over.at least for this season. The summer Olympics enchanted us as we cheered for America and specifically for our numerous local athletes. Vacations were memorable, even those "staycations" in our backyards! Our bodies are tan, the hills are golden, and alas, it's back to life as we know it! After a summer filled with climatic extremes across the United States aren't we happy to usher in autumn's more temperate weather and magnificent seasonal transformations? September is such a fantastic month in Lamorinda country because our perennial beds are still in bloom, we're harvesting our apples, grapes and walnuts, and the leaves are just beginning to change color. Although much of late fall activity revolves around planting bulbs, splitting firewood and putting our gardens to bed for the winter, September is the time to sow seeds for a late, bountiful fall harvest of salad greens and legumes. How wonderful to be able to enjoy fresh vegetables when the colder weather sets in. When you plan and plant now, you'll be ready to enjoy. As many of your summer herbs begin to bolt and flower, make sure to use these edible gems in your September salads! Cynthia's Digging Deep Garden Guide for September "I will waste not even a precious second today in anger or hate or jealousy or selfishness. I know that the seeds I sow I will harvest, because every action, good or bad, is always followed by an equal reaction. I will plant only good seeds this day." Og Mandino, 1923-1996, Author and Speaker Although September can sometimes be a hot month as our Indian Summer approaches, evenings become increasingly cooler as mid-month passes. Summer vegetables begin to fade, perennials stop producing buds and growth slows. Garden life seems a bit lazy these days. The coming season is ideal for planting and essential to garden maintenance. And of course there is nothing better than enjoying a barbecue in the warm evenings reminiscing with those you love. DIG crowded perennials when they have finished flowering. DIVIDE and replant and share divisions of your favorite plants with friends. VISIT nurseries to see all the new fall arrivals. Perennial plants installed during cool fall months need less water to get established and produce stronger growth in the next year. Plant color annuals and winter vegetables now. BUY the smallest size available when choosing new plants. Young plants exhibit less shock and grow faster than older nursery stock. This is especially true of fast growing trees. BULB season begins now. For instant color plant autumn crocus, golden sternbergis, and Nerines. Daffodils, freesias, sparaxis, watsonias and anemones can be planted right away. Buy fresh tulip, hyacinth, and crocus bulbs now and refrigerate for four to six weeks before planting. CHECK stakes on young trees. Replace or repair old ones before the autumn winds arrive to snap off your trees. Two stakes for each tree, located eight to twelve inches from the trunk and connected with sturdy, rubber-tire or hose covered wires, will allow bending without breaking. Swaying encourages growth of sturdy roots. FERTILIZE roses for a grand autumn display. Feed azaleas, camellias, gardenias, and all fruit trees now. DEADHEAD geraniums, roses, and other flowering plants to keep the blooms blossoming until frost. PEST CONTROL is necessary to eradicate the snail population. Set traps, collect by hand at night using a flashlight or try beer in a saucepan. RECYCLE POTS, polystyrene cell packs, and trays. Keep the plastic out of landfills. Many garden centers will accept the recycled containers as long as you remove any metal hangers, and shake out the soil. RAKE the falling leaves as they being to litter the landscape and toss all healthy material into your compost pile. EAT the edible flowers of chives, garlic, basil, mint, dill, and other herbs. SAVE those corn stalks and gourds for next month's festivities. WATER your pumpkins so they'll be big and bright for Halloween. FIRE up the barbecue, pour your favorite beverage, and invite your buddies over for a game of croquet. HAPPY GARDENING TO YOU! c2008 Cynthia Brian; cynthia@GardeningwithCynthia.com www.GardeningwithCynthia.com MARK YOUR CALENDARS!: You won't want to miss these exciting opportunities to dig in the dirt! September 27- The Pear Festival, Moraga Commons Park, Moraga 11am-4pm. Make sure to visit the Be the Star You Are! Charity booth where you and your child can paint a pot, plant seeds and take them home to enjoy. FREE! Pick up an autographed copy of Chicken Soup for the Gardener's Soul or Be the Star You Are! And receive a packet of FREE seeds or potpourri. Be the Star You Are!r is planting the seeds of literacy and growing

responsible youth. http://www.bethestaryouare.org For more information or to volunteer, call 925-376-7126. October 11- The Contra Costa Master Gardeners invite you to put more fun in your gardening with a fall seminar to educate and inspire gardeners of all levels. Call 925-682-6719 to register or go to http://ccmg.ucdavis.edu. Cost is $40 per person with the event at Diablo Valley College in Pleasant Hill from 8:45-3:45. See you in September.September 27 at The Moraga Pear Festival.let's plant seeds together! Until then, may the sun shine in your garden and the stars in your heart! Life is a garden--Dig it! c2008 Cynthia Brian cynthia@GardeningwithCynthia.com www.GardeningwithCynthia.com

**Seeds to Plant for a bountiful late Autumn, early Winter Harvest:**

- Any variety of lettuce
- Asian Greens
- Spinach
- Arugula
- Chard
- Chicory
- Kale
- Cress

Depending on the variety, the seed should be direct-sown roughly six to ten weeks prior to the first light frost.

**Seeds to plant for a second seasonal crop of semi-hardy vegetables suitable for frosts to 30 degrees F.**

- Beets
- Swiss Chard
- Chinese cabbage
- radishes
- Spinach

**These hardy vegetables benefit from hardy frosts:**

- Broccoli
- Broccoli raab
- Cabbage
- Carrots
- Cauliflower
- Kale
- Kohlrabi
- Peas
- Turnips

Don't forget to plant shallots and garlic this fall to harvest next summer and enjoy your pink, purple, and blue flowers in your landscape this September and all year long!

Cynthia Brian

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com



Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA