

# Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for October

*"All my hurts, my garden spade can heal." Ralph Waldo Emerson*

A season of great beauty, autumn is the best time of the year for planting and it is a busy time for gardeners. Raking leaves, deadheading perennials, cleaning out flowerbeds, storing patio furniture, fall provides us with plenty of exercise outdoors in the fresh air. October has historically been a notorious month for fires and earthquakes, thus it is imperative to revisit our family emergency plans. And let's not forget to harvest our ghoulish gourds and decorate our steps with fierce pumpkins for a haunting Halloween to awaken the child within us all.

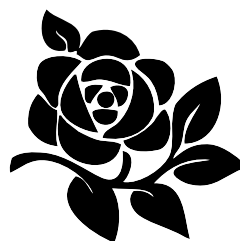
- CLEAR a defensible space around the perimeter of your home and develop an evacuation plan in case of a wildfire. October is notorious for being a fire month. Create an emergency supply list, especially if you live at the top of a canyon as fire normally runs uphill. For more information visit the Cal Fire site at <http://www.fire.ca.gov/>.
- CHOOSE fire resistant plants when considering your landscaping needs. Most fire resistant specimens are also drought resistant, a good pick to help conserve water.
- INFUSE vinegar with the final fresh picked fruits and herbs of this season in preparation for holiday gifts.
- HAND-PICK bugs off plants as a first defense, apply insecticidal soap for harder to kill pests.
- CONTROL next year's weeds with a vinegar based herbicide or corn meal gluten as a pre-emergent.
- GROW swaths of late season interest, especially grasses.
- BRANCH out with fiery leaves of gold, russet, bronze, zinfandel, and sienna hued arrangements for festive fall centerpieces.
- PICK your remaining green tomatoes as soon as temperatures start dropping. Sauté with olive oil and garlic for a tangy, tasty treat of famous fried green tomatoes.
- SEEK sanctuary in your garden by placing a bench in a tranquil, soothing location where you can watch birds, butterflies, and bees be busy. A gently engaging experience, green spaces revitalize people physically, psychologically, and emotionally.
- SPROUT seeds of arugula, mesclun, Asian lettuces, and other gourmet greens in a large container by your kitchen for easy pinching and eating throughout autumn.
- OVER-SEED bare spots in lawns at the first drops of rain, then fertilize with an organic product.
- PUNCH up the drama in your landscape with containers planted with fall colored succulents and annuals available now in garden centers.
- PREVENT garden injuries by stretching before going out to dig, and always bend from the knees, not the back.
- DIVIDE, move, re-plant deer resistant herbaceous peonies in well draining, loaming soil.
- STOP BY the Be the Star You Are!® Express Yourself!™ booth at the Pear and Wine Festival in Moraga on September 29 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. to meet me and writers of Teen Scene, be on the radio and receive free, fresh potpourri; sponsored by the Lamorinda Weekly.
- ROOT cuttings from Jacobinia for a showy next season fall performance.
- PROBLEMS with skunks, yellow jackets, or mosquitoes? Call Contra Costa Vector Control for assistance, removal, and extermination at (925) 685-9301. Sorry, they don't eradicate rats but will give you tips on how to keep your property rodent resistant.
- PLANT alliums and daffodils towards the end of the month to fill the gap between the tulip and peony spring blooms. Stagger plantings of narcissus through January for a long season of beauty.
- VISIT the local farmer's markets for the final fresh fruits and vegetables of the year. Pick up gourds, pumpkins, and fall decorations that will last through Thanksgiving.
- RAKE your fallen leaves and grass clippings to add rich nutrients to the soil. Build your own bin or buy one at selected retailers. Mowing the leaves helps them decompose faster.
- COVER fences or dress up railings by planting clematis, a super easy twining vine with fragrance and flowers.
- KEEP the birds happy in your garden by continuing to provide food, water, and shelter. Your hospitality will be rewarded.
- HARVEST your potatoes as soon as the leaves dry and curl. Dig gently to not bruise the tubers. Leave the tiniest ones to mature longer.
- EXPERIENCE and enjoy a haunted, happy Halloween.

See you on September 29th in Moraga at the Pear and Wine Festival. Wishing you Halloween Dreams of goblins, ghosts, and gourds!

## Happy Gardening to You!

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I am available as a speaker, designer, and consultant.



## MORAGA GARDEN CENTER

### Annual Fall Sale Ends Oct. 31<sup>st</sup>

5 Gallon  
**Roses**  
reg. \$30<sup>00</sup>  
now \$15<sup>99</sup>

up to  
**20% Off**  
California  
Natives

up to  
**50% Off**  
General Nursery  
Stock,  
selected items

Free Plants with Purchase

Moraga Garden Center  
located at the Moraga Shopping Center  
925-376-1810

9am-5pm  
7 days a week