

Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for March

"If a bud burst into bloom every time I thought of you, all the earth would be a glorious garden." Catherine Atkinson

Fruit tree buds are swollen this month and are especially handsome as the buds open to flower and the leaves slowly unfurl. Growth is evident daily and it's especially rewarding to cut a branch for indoor gazing. Try a flowering peach, pear, or cherry for a long lasting experiment in watching nature come alive. With the month of March heralding in the "real" spring, now is the time to check our brown thumbs at the garden gate and dive in with the green.

- **IMPROVE** your homes value by adding trees to the landscape. It is estimated that landscaping along with mature trees can add anywhere from 10 to 20 percent to your home's property value.
- **PLANT** early blooming pollinators including California poppy, chives, larkspur dianthus, lupine, pea, viola, and sweet alyssum.
- **EAT** broccoli. Broccoli is one of the world's most nutritious vegetables. It energizes us with vitamins C, K, and A as well as folate, manganese, potassium and magnesium. It is high in fiber and protein as well as flavonoids that reduce inflammation, and phytonutrients that help the body detoxify. It could be the most multi-tasking vegetable ever.
- **SOAK** the seeds of bean sprouts each Sunday and you'll have a fresh week's worth of sprouts by Friday.
- **GO** au natural. Spend time outdoors in natural settings. Being in touch with nature is essential to good health of mind, body, and spirit.
- **ELIMINATE** pesticides from your gardening tool kit. They are detrimental to beneficial insects and humans.
- **START** seeds inside now for transplanting next month to your garden space.
- **INCREASE** visual and nutritional interest by planning to plant vegetables and herbs in ornamental containers close to your kitchen door. You won't sacrifice flavor and functionality will soar.
- **START** your spring gardening by improving the soil. Gardens are often missing the microorganisms and nutrients needed for a thriving crop.
- **CLUMP** flowers together in areas measuring four feet diameter or more to attract bees, butterflies, and birds.
- **FERTILIZE** fruit trees and flowering shrubs with a high nitrogen solution.
- **DIVIDE** perennials such as daylilies and agapanthas.
- **VISIT** the de Young Museum's exhibit of Bouquet of Arts for an invasion of flowers and masterpieces March 19-23. For tickets, go to <https://tickets.famsf.org>.
- **RE-SEED** or plant a new lawn during this spring weather. Commence weekly mowing for sturdier growing. For best results, do not use a leaf bag but instead allow the clippings to compost on the grass naturally.
- **BRIGHTEN** a weary fence with the purple lilac vine that resembles sweet peas, Hardenbergia violaceae.
- **SPRAY** aphids with a strong blast from the hose. If more attention is needed, fill a spray bottle with dish washing detergent mixed with water to douse the pests.
- **CLEAN** fountains, ponds, birdbaths, and other water features to welcome our flying friends home for the warmer weather.
- **HOWL** at the moon at the vernal equinox on March 20, the real first day of spring when day and night are exactly 12 hours each!
- **SHOOT** photos of your naked trees and more as they begin to don their spring wardrobe.

The buds are bursting into bloom as I think with love of all my two-footed and four-footed friends. Life is a glorious garden.

Happy gardening to you!

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Cynthia Brian
The Goddess Gardener
Cynthia@goddessgardener.com
www.goddessgardener.com
925-377-7827
Cynthia is available as a speaker and consultant.



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Utility Right-of Way

Pruning for utility line clearance does not always follow desirable pruning techniques in regards to appearance and health of the tree. In this situation, the needs of the utility right-of-way take priority over the tree.

When you have a tree under a power line that requires frequent reduction by the utility co. it's important to have proper pruning before, or have the tree removed, and plant a tree with the criteria (i.e. size and placement) that should be determined by an arborist, so that a tree's health and appearance will never be compromised by the need for utility pruning. So don't wait until it's too late, call your local ISA Arborist at Advance Tree Service and Landscaping to help you determine your choice for the perfect tree.

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925-376-6528

advancetree@sbcglobal.net www.advancetree.com

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