

## Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

# Salute to the Season

By Cynthia Brian

Like a middle child, July emerges with a bang, fireworks, parades, and the celebration of our American independence. Sandwiched between the end of school, graduation, and Father's Day month of June and the vacation, travel, back-to-school month of August, July must grab our attention swiftly, lest it be lost between its frenzied siblings. And capture our interest it does with an abundance of luscious fresh fruits, vegetables, herbs to nurture our bellies, and a profusion of sizzling hot hued plants to seduce our spirits.

Summer is in full swing in the garden. This is the season of plenty. For a gardener, the shed becomes a playhouse, and shears the tool of choice as we trim, cut, prune, and fill our baskets with food and flowers to share. Containers are overflowing with pretty petunias and spilling lobelia as we welcome our visitors to a party on the patio.

We witness the bud burst of agapanthus into brilliant blue blooms within days. Gladioli spires shoot for the stars, their cherry throats contrasting spectacularly with the grays of the dusty miller. Honeybees dance on the magnolias, hollyhocks, penstemons, and



*Pink bower vine twines around a pergola.*

flowering succulents, sucking the nectar and pollinating surrounding specimens. Fences of scarlet trumpet vine herald the arrival of butterflies and humming-

*Photos Cynthia Brian*

birds. Asiatic lilies in colors of the rainbow poke their heads above the crowd making sure they are recognized. Hydrangea blooms are as big as beach balls, mandevilla and pink bower vine enliven arbors and pergolas. The garden is alive, vibrant, and waiting to be enjoyed.

Like all celebrations, there are always a few inconveniences that need to be addressed. Here are my favorite ways of eliminating the pests.



*Fennel seeds are delicious raw or dried. Stems make lovely cut arrangements.*



*Butter colored Asiatic lilies reach for the sun.*