



When pruned properly, crepe myrtles make a dramatic statement in the landscape.

Photos Cynthia Brian

To better serve our readers' gardening needs, Lamorinda Weekly will offer Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide in the first issue of every month. The second issue will showcase Digging Deep-Gardening with Cynthia Brian with some mid-month tips. The Ask Cynthia, Reader's Request will be published as space is available. We hope you enjoy our new garden format for 2014.

Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for January

By Cynthia Brian

"A gardener is one for whom the prospect of the future is not threatening, but happy." – Anne Morrow Lindbergh

Welcome to a new year filled with abundant cheer and probably too many deer! Okay, an accomplished poet I am not, however, I am a dedicated nature girl. I look forward to being your personal gardening guide every month. Most everyone begins January with big dreams, expansive goals, and resolutions to be and do better. We want to lose weight, get a better job, find our Romeo/Juliette, or move to our dream location. Statistics indicate that by Feb. 1, four out of five of those sacred resolutions have died like a plant that isn't watered. Why do we give up? Because it's hard work to change, morph, and grow. It takes dedication, perseverance, and a deep commitment to imagine magnificence and know we deserve to receive the best. Gardeners have the strength of character and the desire to make the world a more beautiful place, one seedling at a time. We are optimists. Even in a drought, or the long December freeze, our glasses remain half full. We know that failure is fertilizer for the compost pile. I look forward to meeting each landscape challenge with you this year with tenacity and courage. We are gardeners and we are strong. Most of all, we are not threatened and we are super happy. Together we will grow where we are planted!

- CREATE a budget for your gardening desires for the year. By including everything you want to do in your private paradise, you will be armored to meet the unexpected.
- THINK next winter harvest by putting a few different squash varieties on your spring planting list. Flavors, textures, and growing times vary. Consider Bush Delicata (80 days), Gold Nugget (95 days), and Sweet Mama (84 days), all appropriate for smaller garden spaces.
- ALLOW the bright berries of cotoneaster, pyroantha, holly, purple beautyberry, and viburnum to remain on the bush to give nourishment to the hungry birds.
- REFRAIN from pruning any foliage damaged by the December freeze. Wait until March when the frost danger has passed.
- PRUNE rose bushes towards the end of the month. Cut above the bud and also remove all crossing or deadwood. Your prized bushes will be sprouting new growth within six weeks.
- PRUNE wisteria, deciduous flowering vines as well as crepe myrtle, apple, pear, and peach trees. There is no need to prune cherries.
- FEED your citrus trees. Check with your local garden center for the best fertilizer combinations. A feeding of nitrogen, phosphorous, and potassium in a ratio of 2-1-1 is usually a smart bet when used according to the directions.
- BRIGHTEN the dreary garden with paths of pansies and primroses.
- CUT back the dried foliage from ornamental grasses as well as any old stems from perennials.
- SPRAY diluted horticultural oil on fruit trees and roses to kill the overwintering insects and insect eggs.

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Winter Pruning

Winter is the best time to start pruning deciduous plants and trees, such as maples, shrubs, roses, most fruit trees and most of all your Monterey pines. They go dormant in the winter and some lose their leaves. Deciduous plants are best pruned in the winter because that's when they're dormant and less prone to disease.

Before you start hacking away at your yard, you may want to call in a professional Arborist from Advance Tree Service to give you their advice on what should be done, the proper handling during pruning is essential to ensure a healthy future for your trees and shrubs.

So don't wait until it's too late, call your local Arborist at Advance Tree Service and Landscaping to help make your yard its very best.

Advance Tree Service

Your Authority on Trees and Landscape.

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