

# Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for October

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- **TRANSITION** indoor plants that you have summered on the patio to the inside by repotting if necessary. Clean the top of the soil, inspect for insects, dispose of dead leaves, and water thoroughly before placing in a sunny interior.
- **PROTECT** tender plants from a frosty night by covering with a sheet, blanket, or other non-plastic material.
- **TUCK** favorite spring blooming bulbs into your landscape beginning at the end of October through January. Dutch Iris and Daffodils are both deer and gopher resistant.
- **DIVIDE** calla lilies, daylilies, daisies, and naked ladies every few years for best blooms.
- **GATHER** pine needles from the base of pine trees to use as mulch around acid loving plants such as roses, azaleas, rhododendrons, fuchsias, camellias, and gardenias.
- **BURSTS** of color for the autumn garden are found with plumbago, gerbera, society garlic, sea lavender, salvia, penstemon, and hollyhock.
- **DEADHEAD** roses weekly for continuous blooms until hard pruning in January.
- **COLLECT** rose petals early in the morning to dry for potpourri and sachets.
- **CUT** asparagus stalks to within 3 or 4 inches from the ground.
- **CREATE** Pinterest boards or use apps to help you keep garden design ideas handy. Start now to think about your spring wish list.
- **RAKE** leaves to add to a compost pile or bin along with food scraps, egg shells, coffee grinds, tea bags, newspaper, and other organic matter. Within a few months, you'll have a nutrient rich amendment for your soil.
- **IDENTIFY** trees you'll love to include in your yard by perusing a new book, "Landscaping with Trees" by Scott Zanon. Even though it profiles trees for residential and commercial properties in the Midwest, most of the specimens grow well in our area including maples, buckeyes, crabapples, dogwoods, magnolias, and many more.
- **REMOVE** leaves and fallen debris promptly from ponds and water features to keep the water clean.
- **COLLECT** seeds from your nasturtiums, cosmos, zinnias, marigolds, dahlias, and other annuals. Allow the pods to dry in a paper bag. Store in a cool, dark, dry place (shed, garage, closet) until next spring.
- **WATER** indoor plants once a month with a solution of 2 tablespoons of vinegar to a gallon of water to reduce salt build up and soil alkalinity.
- **SCATTER** seeds of lupine, California poppy, bachelor button, and larkspur. Scratch the soil to cover the seeds, discouraging birds and squirrels from dining.
- **KEEP** bird feeders full and fountains fresh as incentives for our feathered friends to become permanent bug eating residents.
- **TRELLIS** climbing vines. Potato vine, jasmine, honeysuckle, pink bower vine, and sweet potato vine make colorful, sweet smelling privacy screens.
- **REDUCE** irrigation to once a week and once the rain begins, turn off your automatic sprinklers.
- **PICK** up **FREE** seeds, potpourri, and garden book marks at the Be the Star You Are!® booth at the Moraga Pear and Wine Festival from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 27. Participate in the story game and say hello to me. Sponsored by Lamorinda Weekly and Napa Valley Wealth Management.
- **FERTILIZE** evergreen shrubs, vines, and conifers immediately if you didn't do so in September.
- **ENCOURAGE** red-tip photinia to be dense and bushy by sculpting and maintaining a height and width of 6 to 8 feet. If you don't prune regularly, photinia become unmanageable 20-foot trees.
- **CHECK** olive harvests for grub and maggot larvae. Only treatment for this pest is a pheromone trap.
- **SEEK** certified or experienced arborists to prune your favorite specimen trees. Remove a tree that has become too large for the space, intruding on foundations, or blocking views. Replace with appropriate sized trees, perhaps one that boasts autumn color.



*Gourds and pumpkins signal the advent of autumn celebrations..*



*Purple blooms on the potato vine climb a trellis offering privacy and beauty.*