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Digging Deep-Gardening With Cynthia Brian

By Cynthia Brian



Drape burlap over tender plants to prevent frostbite. Photo Cynthia Brian

"With our thoughts, we make the world." ~ Buddha

My first gardening calendar was published in 1993. I had worked with a renowned photographer for over 18 months shooting fabulous photos from my garden throughout the seasons, taking copious notes of what to do and when to do it, traveling to numerous zones to note the monthly cycles. I wrote my copy on an Apple desktop, the photographs were transparencies, and the finished product was a beautiful, printed, shrink-wrapped gift of beautiful flowers with monthly tips worth saving. Over the years, people have shown me the tablemats, collages, and other creative things that were made with that calendar. Since the backup to all of my work was on floppy disks, I no longer have access to my unedited insights. Thankfully, I have the photos and the published calendar as a souvenir of my efforts. This loss of my creative writings caused me to ponder the digital mania that

has descended upon humanity in our yearning to eliminate paper archiving. We tend to keep everything on our computers, designating Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest as our memory banks.

My fear is that our history will be relegated to oral rememberings as technology rapidly changes. Since computers became a household necessity, we have stored our data on floppies, CDs, DVDs, flash drives, portable hard drives, and now in the cloud, but will future generations ever be able to access any of this, as equipment evolves and changes? My iPhoto folder has now surpassed 20,000 jpegs. Digital photos from 2009 and earlier that were not printed are no longer accessible since I have upgraded computers multiple times and those earlier backup disks are not compatible.

Earlier this year, I made a book of my favorite garden photographs throughout the seasons accompanied by my favorite garden quotes. The book was a gift to myself as a reminder of my years of dedication, hard work and love of nature. As I perused snapshots from a quarter century of gardening bliss, I was able to see how much I had accomplished with the help of Mother Nature.

Cynthia Brian's Mid-Month Reminders and Tips

REFRAIN from collecting and eating mushrooms unless you are absolutely certain they are edible. A good friend recently collected a variety of mushrooms based on information she perused in a foraging guidebook. Fortunately she took them to a mycological expert for positive identification. Eighty-four of the 85 fungi she had in her basket were poisonous.

CLEAN storm drains, gutters, and anywhere where water could clog or cause problems when the rains come.

DECORATE for the holidays with branches, leaves, berries, twigs, pinecones and natural cuttings from your backyard. Utilize surprising colors, like purple - not just reds, greens and blues.

COVER tender plants from frost and cold temperatures with burlap. Patio furniture can be protected from the elements with plastic, but use burlap or fabric on plants and shrubs. Citrus is especially susceptible to frostbite.

CREATE a charming birdhouse with corks. With the festivities of the holidays, collect corks to make a home for your feathered friends.

SPRAYPAINT the un-carved pumpkins and gourds silver, gold, or bronze to add pizzazz to a

front porch or entrance. For recycling at its best, after the holidays, add to the compost pile.

BAIT for snails and slugs during this wet season.

HARVEST cabbages, Swiss chard and kale. Massage your kale to tenderize and eliminate bitterness.

TUNE in to StarStyle(r) Radio from 4 to 5 p.m. Pacific Time on Dec. 30 for a full hour of live garden talk with Britain's rose expert from David Austin Roses. Bare-root plantings start in January and this show will give you lots of information. http://starstyleradio.net/Starstyle_Radio/Entries/2015/12/30_Toast_the_New_Year_with_David_Austin_Roses.html

MAKE a photo album of your garden pictures throughout the years as a gift to yourself and future family gardeners.

It is too late to seed or reseed your lawns. My new grass is coming in slowly because of the extreme changes in weather. In spring, we will revisit planting a waterless turf when soil temperatures rise to 50-70 degrees.

Happy Gardening and Happy Growing.

How happy I am that I had not only digitized photos, but also printed them for posterity. When we first moved to this area, our lot was a hillside of wild grasses, poison oak, and blackberry bushes. It is now an oasis filled with lush landscaping, orchards, vines, trees, fruits, herbs, flowers, birds, bees, butterflies and wildlife. One of the mottos I have always lived by is "what you think about and talk about comes about!" For me, I am always thinking about gardening. Today, all I have to do is look around to see that my personal world was created in my thoughts.

As the end of the year approaches, I encourage you to invest in archiving your precious memories of family, friends, pets, plants and places you love, not only on your apps and gadgets, but in the old fashioned way: printing. Don't allow your legacy of a life well lived become obsolete as technology races forward. Do some digital digging and store a hard copy of your treasures. Plant and grow your memoirs.

May you shine with happiness for the holidays. Thank you for a fabulous year of Digging Deep and Gardening with Cynthia Brian. I appreciate you.



As tempting as it is to collect mushrooms, unless you are an expert, refrain. Photos Cynthia Brian



Rose hips can be twined into decor or made into teas for the holidays.



Plant pretty primroses for instant color all winter long.



A combination of ferns and poinsettias brighten a porch.

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