

## 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® 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](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.



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



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



*Plant pretty primroses for instant color all winter long.*