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Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for January

By Cynthia Brian



Birds of Paradise bloom in January, even in the cold. Photos Cynthia Brian

"All I have seen teaches me to trust the creator for all I have not seen." ~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

Happy New Year! How many times have you voiced this well-versed exclamation in the past few days? After the Christmas holidays, we go straight into "New Year" mode with the excitement of a rebirth. The first of January offers us an opportunity for a do-over, a fresh start, a new beginning, and 2016 is a milestone for several of us at Lamorinda Weekly as we are celebrating nine years of quality writing and publishing targeted with you in mind. It has been an honor and a privilege for me to bring you information that hopefully inspires, educates, entertains, and empowers you not only in your gardens but also in life. As you set your goals and write resolutions, I encourage you to make this the year that you drink in the beauty of nature and surround yourself with the connections of the earth. No matter what

happens to us in our hectic lives, when we dig in the soil, we feel enriched in body, mind and soul. This year my commitment to you is to bring you the latest trends, tips, and topics to save resources while maintaining an outdoor space that will enliven your spirit and offer you sanctuary from the stresses of the world.

What's trending in the garden world for 2016, you ask?

Gardeners across the nation are seeking larger plants that repeat bloom.

Compact size plants for small patios, condominiums, apartments, and town homes are in big demand. These space savers include dwarf and compact varieties for containers.

Fragrance tops the list for new purchases.

Water-wise plants will become the norm in drought areas such as ours.

Low maintenance is a priority as people have busy work and social schedules. Plants that are easy-care without too much pruning or deadheading are popular.

Edible fruits and vegetables will be part of most households as we all embrace the plant to plate movement in our own kitchens. There really is nothing better than growing our own for freshness, flavors and nutrients.

Earth matters most. Consumers crave plants that will survive and thrive in local conditions without harming our environment.

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COLLECTION of your holiday trees is scheduled for the same day as your garbage pickup, but with a separate truck. Cut your tree in half or in pieces and place it in the yard waste cart or call (925) 935-8900 for an on-call recycling. Remove lights, ornaments, tinsel and trimmings. Leave trees at curbside. Cut all trees that are 10 feet or over in half. Do not leave stands. Also, no artificial or flocked trees will be collected as all trees are destined for composting.

DEEP ROOT FEED your crape myrtles, magnolia, and Japanese maple trees if you have not already done this to give them a jump on spring.

PLANT poinsettias outside as color accents. If you have several poinsettias, plant them along a pathway. Most will eventually die, but they will brighten the dark January days.

BARE ROOT season is upon us. Fruit trees, berry bushes, perennials, vines and roses are

readily available at your local garden centers and favorite nurseries.

TUNE in to StarStyle(r) Radio from 4 to 5 p.m. Dec. 30 for a full hour of live garden talk with Britain's premiere rose expert from David Austin Roses. This program offers expert advice on bare root plantings as well as general rose care. Go to www.StarStyleRadio.net and click on Dec. 30 or go to the direct link at http://starstyleradio.net/Starstyle_Radio/Entries/2015/12/30_Toast_the_New_Year_with_David_Austin_Roses.html.

HEAVY PRUNE your roses any time this month. Remove any dead wood or diseased parts. Do not put these in the compost pile.

CUT a bouquet of narcissus to perfume your bedrooms and baths.

SPRAY an application of sulfur or organic dormant spray on fruit trees to kill overwintering insects.

MOVE living Christmas trees outside. They can be planted in an area where they may grow to their natural height, or keep them in a container for next year.

MULCH your flowerbeds with three inches of organic matter.

RAKE the remaining fallen leaves from lawns to allow your grass to breathe. No need to mow in the winter.

CELEBRATE the 12th day of Christmas on Jan. 6, known as the Epiphany and Three Wise Kings Day, by surprising your children with fresh oranges and tangerines plucked from your tree. It has been a family custom in our household for over a century. You can read my story in my book, *Be the Star You Are!(r) 99 Gifts for Living, Loving, Laughing, and Learning to Make a Difference* available at <http://starstyleradio.net/Store.html>.

WRITE in a garden journal starting this week or chronicle your garden escapades on your computer.

ADD statuary to your landscape to bring art into the garden.

DIVIDE and replant day lilies. All American Daylilies offer many different colors and varieties for all locations.

DONATE at PayPal Giving Fund, which adds 1 percent to every contribution, and get that end of year tax write-off. Everyone wins. <http://bit.ly/1YuK44k>

May peace be with you as you make the best of this season. Welcome to a bright new shiny year, each day anew!



All American Daylilies are ready to be planted.



Toadstools sprout in a potted plant during the darkest night hours.



Statuary adds artistic bling to your landscape.



Pistachio berries are food for the birds and décor for your table.



Cynthia Brian wishes you a Happy New Year!

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Tune into Cynthia's Radio show at www.StarStyleRadio.net

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