

*Digging Deep*

# Spring Forward with Fresh Gardening Ideas This May

By Cynthia Brian

“Now every field is clothed with grass, and every tree with leaves; now the woods put forth their blossoms, and the year assumes its gay attire.” ~Virgil



A beautiful shade oasis of camellias and azaleas.

Photos Cynthia Brian

With all the rain we've enjoyed this season, spring has birthed the most spectacular garden displays experienced in years. The air is fragrant with the scent of jasmine, emerald green hills are decorated with golden poppies, and pretty peonies populate our plots. Songbirds chirp as they feather their nests, butterflies flit from blossom to bloom, lady beetles and bees are busy with their business. A lovely turkey feather poked out from under my fig bush by my living room window. When I went to grab it, I realized it was attached to a wild hen sitting on eggs. She wasn't even startled and I've continued to enjoy watching her daily.

Our natural world has found its equilibrium.

My Pearl's Premium lawn is finally looking lush and full. The secret was constant reseeded, daily moisture and netting to keep the birds at bay. This summer will tell how drought resistant the grass is. One thing is for certain, it has definitely forced out weeds and dandelions. Whereas I used to pick at least a hundred dandelions a day to feed the quail, I am now down to half a dozen or even less. Thus far I am impressed with this grass seed and will keep you posted as the dry weather sets in. ([www.pearlspremium.com](http://www.pearlspremium.com))

I've been busy planting seeds one by one, a very tedious task, as I'm not one to start my seedlings indoors. Instead I use an egg carton and pour the various seeds I want to plant into the egg holders, then, I meticulously plunge each tiny seed into its own hole. Some seeds, like Echinacea, are smaller than a pinpoint. One has to have serious dedication to growing a variety of specimens when sowing. My preferred method is to scatter a big bucket of seeds mixed with sand and see what thrives. Cinda McKinnon of Orinda has used this method successfully on her wild Mediterranean hillside.



A stunning palette of purple and orange highlights this Mediterranean-style garden of scattered poppy seeds, purple bearded iris, Santa Barbara daisy, California natives, and lavender in Cinda McKinnon's drought resistant garden in Orinda.

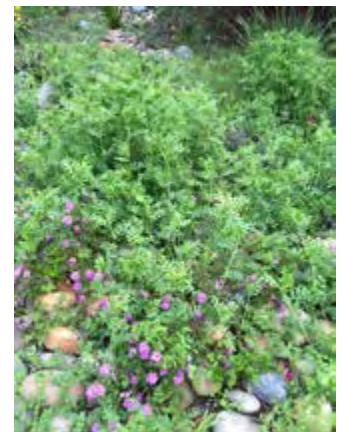
My March 23 article about cultivating a wildflower meadow (go to <http://www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue1002/Digging-Deep-How-to-Cultivate-a-Wildflower-Meadow.html>) sparked immense interest from across the country. One of my favorite descriptive notes arrived from Ron in Texas who wrote:

“What a wonderful article on growing wildflowers. I've always loved wildflowers, remembering the trillium that carpeted the Wisconsin forests in the spring and the daisies, black-eyed Susans, and other wildflowers that covered any open field all summer long. Later, finding wild azalea in the Georgian woods and now, in Texas, going to see the bluebonnets and Indian paintbrush, as well as finding every vacant lot here in Houston filled with 7-foot tall sunflowers. Thanks to Lady Bird Johnson, planes seed most Texas highways with beautiful wildflowers largely in the spring before the heat and drought of summer and their beauty. I always let my yard grow wild in spring so that many wildflowers there can bloom and reseed.”

And that is the secret to spring wildflowers — allow them to bloom and reseed.

The simple pleasures of spring are for all of us to savor. Get moving and get into your garden.

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Till your vetch into your garden soil to add nutrients.