

Digging Deep ... continued from page D16

CYNTHIA BRIAN'S FRESH IDEAS:

REFRESH your dirt with a few yards of new, enriched top soil and compost. Good soil is the foundation for a healthy, happy landscape.

TILL your cover crops of vetch, mustard, clover, or fava beans into your soil. If they have grown to large to till, pull them out, run them over with a lawnmower, then return them to the soil for all of the nutrients they will provide your produce.

SEPARATE seeds in an egg carton for ease in sowing.

POKE holes in the soil with a pencil or stick to plant a variety of small seeds including sunflowers, hollyhock, cathedral bells, purple hyacinth beans and perennial sweet peas.

SOAK morning glory seeds for eight hours before planting or nick with a fingernail clipper to assist in rooting.

DISCOVER spring by scattering wildflower seeds. Allow them to bloom and reseed themselves for another display next season.

GATHER a bouquet of peonies or even a single stem to create a stunning and long lasting floral arrangement.

BUILD simple raised beds to grow your bounty of vegetables. Even a small 3 x 3 foot redwood box will provide space for plenty.

SHOP for vegetables and herbs at your favorite nursery or garden center. Tomatoes, peppers, squash, eggplant, watermelon, pumpkin, zucchini, beans and cucumbers are available in four-inch pots and six packs at reasonable prices.

PULL weeds on a continuous basis. Weeds zap the moisture from the plants we want. Don't let them form seed heads.



Peonies make fabulous cut flowers.

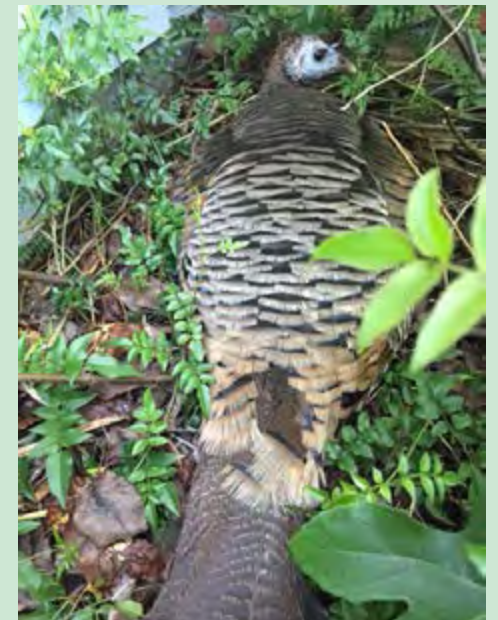
EMPTY standing water from pots, tires, neglected ponds, pools or any place where mosquito larvae will breed. With all the rain we've had this year, mosquitoes could spread West Nile virus. If you have a pond, the Contra Costa Mosquito and Vector Control will provide free mosquito fish by calling (925) 771-6196. California authorities are monitoring the activity of West Nile virus and request that any dead birds or squirrels be reported to them at (877) 968-2473.

SEED and reseed your lawns specifically when it's raining. Make sure to keep the seed moist until it sprouts. Pearl's Premium may be the answer for a lush, green, drought-resistant lawn. www.PearlsPremium.com

DANCE the snail stomp, a dance my children and I invented one very wet winter years ago. Go out at night with gloves on, flashlight in hand, and a bucket to pick up slugs and snails. Find an area to dump and dance. (If you don't like to dance, fill the bucket with soapy water and the dirty deed is done.)

TOUR gardens when you are not enjoying your personal backyard. Check the newspaper for garden tours around the Bay Area. You'll find inspiration in what others have designed and accomplished.

Enjoy the splendors of spring while you dream of a personal journey through nature.



A turkey hen sits on her eggs under a fig bush at Cynthia Brian's home.



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IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR

Time to Prune - Proper pruning is essential in developing a tree with a strong structure and desirable form. Trees that receive the appropriate pruning measures while they are young will require little corrective pruning when they mature.

Proper technique is essential. Each cut has the potential to change the growth of the tree. Poor pruning can cause damage that lasts for the life of the tree.

So don't wait until it's too late, have a complete inspection by a Certified Arborist at Advance Tree Service.

*Advance Tree Service
Your Authority on Trees.*



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