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## Digging Deep

By Cynthia Brian



Cymbidiums are blooming in abundance outdoors.

germinate quickly. An edible garden is especially popular with young kids.

**RECYCLE** plastic six-packs, flats, and pots to use to grow your own seedlings. Wash well before beginning the process and make sure the drainage holes are not plugged.

**HANG** a shoe organizer on a sunny wall with the pockets filled to three-fourths full with soil for a fun vertical garden that is especially excellent for herbs, lettuces, and other compact plants.

**BUY** sterile seed-starting mix, which doesn't have any soil in it when you want to plant seeds in a container.

**READ** seed packets carefully. It's critical to know how to plant each variety of seed, what amount of water, sunshine and care it will need. You also want to know how big the plant will become.

**PLANT** extra seeds as many will not germinate.

**KEEP** seedlings moist or they will shrivel and die as summer approaches.

Don't over water or seeds will drown.

**THIN** as necessary. Discards the remnants to the compost bin.

**FERTILIZE** with organic micronutrients once a plant has several leaves.

**TRANSPLANT** when each plant is big enough to outgrow its planter.

**REWARD** yourself and your children with the harvest of vegetables or flowers.

### SUN SAFE TIPS:

National Sun Safety Week is June 5-11.

**APPLY** sunscreen daily and especially before going out into the garden. Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer.

**WEAR** a hat to protect your head and sunglasses to protect your eyes.

**CHECK** your skin for any abnormalities and see a physician if you suspect problems.

### FIREPROOF YOUR GARDEN

It's probably not possible to completely fireproof any area, but follow guidelines issued by the

"The world is but a canvas to the imagination."

Henry David Thoreau

With summer approaching quickly, June is possibly one of the busiest months. Graduations, Father's Day, weddings, birthdays, vacations, swim meets, pool parties...it seems that these 30 days offer the most opportunities for celebrations.

It is time to fire up the barbeque, sweep the patio, freshen the flowerbeds and get ready for some serious fun. By growing your own food, you and your family will be healthier, happier, and enjoy more exercise. Get your children involved in the seed sowing, planting, and caring process to help them understand how food travels from the ground to the table. Allow your garden to become your artistic canvas to showcase your imagination and creativity throughout the summer.

### SEED SOWING

This is a fun project to do with children, providing pride in growing. Start with radishes, lettuces, kale, zinnias, marigolds, or beans as they

fire protection districts to create defensible spaces no later than June 15.

**PREVENT** embers from igniting your home in the event of a fire by clearing leaves, needles and debris from gutters, eaves, porches and decks.

**REMOVE** dead vegetation from under your deck and within ten feet of your home.

**TRIM** weeds and grasses to three inches.

**PRUNE** tree branches so that the lowest branches are between six-ten feet from the ground.

**REDUCE** "fire fuel laddering" by pruning to separate trees from bushes.

**MAINTAIN** your property and weed-whack or pull any re-growth.

Cynthia Brian's Fresh Tips for Your June Garden

**AVOID** using pesticides and insecticides as they kill the beneficial insects along with the invasive. Bees, bats and bugs that help our crops reproduce and flowers flourish can be destroyed.

**DINE** on nasturtium. For a stunning and delicious appetizer, roll curried egg salad into the peppery leaves of nasturtium. Add edible flowers to the platter. It's delicious.

**PACK** your salads with nutritional vitamins A, C, K, iron, calcium, potassium and folate by growing leafy greens such as frisee, mache, romaine, bok choy, arugula and kale. Don't forget to toss in radish and turnip tops, too, for an added crunch.

**BUILD** a raised bed for a low maintenance edible feast. Make sure to put mesh wire on the bottom to keep out the gophers, moles and rats. Fill with clean soil for best results.

**ADD** a gently meandering dry creek with gravel and rocks to help with drainage, runoff, and provide a natural look to your landscaping. For a shaded area, plant with hosta, ferns and lamium.

**INVITE** butterflies into your garden by providing a sunny spot for them to land, shrubs for shelter, masses of flowers for nectar, and a saucer of water for a sweet drink. Make sure to change the water daily so as not to attract mosquito larvae.

**DEADHEAD** roses as soon as flowers are spent to encourage continual re-blooming. This is one of the best years ever for the prolific showcase of these prize winners.

**RECYCLE** brown and green waste, fruit, vegetable scraps, coffee and tea into a natural fertilizer. Make your own compost all year round to feed your plants.

**PICK** bouquets of vibrant sweet peas and clematis for long lasting fragrant arrangements to brighten your interiors as well as your outdoor dining areas.

**GROW** cymbidium orchids in containers located in a north or northwest location to enjoy annual blooms. Cymbidiums bloom for months, and can be brought indoors for further pleasure. When the spires fade, return the pots to the coolness of outdoors.

**FERTILIZE** rhododendrons, azaleas, roses and camellias.

**ENJOY** your special celebrations in your charmingly refreshed garden.

**REFLECT** your unique personality with your plantings and artistry. Be creative in the outdoors. It's more fun.

Congratulations to everyone who is graduating and commemorating a special occasion. Happy Father's Day to all the dedicated dads, especially those who share the respect for Mother Nature with their children.

Happy gardening. Happy growing!



Sweet peas reseed and climb wire or fences. Excellent for cut bouquets.



Roses are prolific bloomers this year.



Rhododendrons need moisture to keep healthy. Photos Cynthia Brian



Easy to grow lettuce and kale will be welcome for summer salads.



Jacob's Coat is a stunning rose packed with multiple sunny colors.



For a soothing shade garden, columbine mixed with hosta in a gravel riverbed is attractive.



Cynthia Brian cautions gardeners to wear hats in the garden.

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