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## March Gardening Guide

By Cynthia Brian



The bright white blossoms of a flowering pear tree. Photos Cynthia Brian

"May the road rise up to meet you, may the wind be ever at your back. May the sun shine warm upon your face, and the rain fall softly on your fields." -- Irish Blessing

Although I don't have an ounce of Irish in me, every March I get excited to celebrate St. Patrick's Day. Besides the fact that the beloved rebirth of nature is officially only days away, my adoration of the Emerald Isle is deep-rooted. My good fortune as a child was to be taught for eight full years by dedicated, intelligent Irish nuns, and to be mentored by Irish priests who had my best interests at heart. I danced throughout California in an Irish dance troop and one of my best friends in the world is my Irish pen pal, whom I met through letters crossing the Atlantic at the age of eight. My Irish first-grade teacher and I are still in constant correspondence. She always told me she kept a leprechaun in her pocket just in case she needed a trick or two. Fortunately I've been blessed to spend many weeks with these friends in their very green country where I've been officially

christened an "honorary Irish woman."

With the propensity of rain that we've enjoyed this past winter, our countryside is looking very much like the verdant island. As I look at the cattle grazing on the hill, I am reminded of my friend's dairy farm in Limerick where the rich milk goes to produce Bailey's Irish Cream. I milked those cows when I visited and was rewarded by a shower of hot manure on my hair. That was many years ago, but I'll never forget the smell...and the laughter.

Since that time, I have always grown shamrocks, which here in America we call oxalis, a noxious weed. Nevertheless, I have a major fondness for the bright yellow or pink flowers of these shamrocks as I seek the rare four-leaf clover pattern. For each petal on the shamrock a wish of good health, good luck, and eternal happiness are bestowed. I'll take all of the blessings and positive thoughts offered! If you are not a fan of shamrocks, plant baby tears in a shaded garden. They, too, are reminiscent of the Celtic spirit.

The good news is that spring is coming and with it an abundance of flowers and beauty. All you have to do is look around to witness the beautiful blossoms on pear and peach trees. My plums have already finished blooming and are leafing out. Rose bushes are budding. My calla lilies, daffodils, crocosimias, hyacinths and tulips are abloom, spreading their joy and fragrance throughout the landscape.

It's time to pull the weeds, prepare the soil, and get ready for a wonderful season of seeding and sowing.

May the luck of the Irish be with you!

Cynthia Brian's Garden Guide for March

CUT budding branches from fruit trees to place in a vase to watch the petals open. Add a few drops of bleach to the water to prolong the blooms. A few sprigs of narcissus provide perfume to an entire room.

USE baby tears as a ground cover in shaded areas as a pretty green carpet.

CUT calla lilies to be used indoors in a vase. They will last two or more weeks as long as you replace the water regularly and add a drop of bleach or lemon juice to the water.

INVITE the wood nymphs, faeries, and leprechauns into your garden to help you with your chores by providing hiding places for these wee ones.

CLEANSE your indoor air with a container of peace lilies, also known as the sail plant.

FORAGE for wild greens including Miner's lettuce, mustard, creek watercress and wild strawberries. The young leaves are delicious in salads.

PULL weeds as soon as the rains terminate. Leave weeds on hillsides to prevent erosion until the end of next month.

PREPARE your soil for next month's planting by mixing your compost into the topsoil. Don't rototill unless you are creating a new garden bed as you don't want to disturb the existing ecosystem that surely contains many worms.

FERTILIZE lawns, trees and annuals with a high-nitrogen organic fertilizer. It's best to fertilize your lawns when you know it's going to rain to assure a deep feeding. The winter rains have definitely stripped our soil of nutrients making it necessary to boost the nutrition now. Remember to mow without the bag as the lawn cuttings are rich in nourishment for the grass.

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☐ TIME to reseed or sod lawns. My preferred grass seeds are purchased from Pearl's Premium. [www.PearlsPremium.com](http://www.PearlsPremium.com). I also really like mixing in clover as it is self-fertilizing and always green. You do have to like having tiny white or pink flowers in your grass.

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☐ NET areas where you are seeding, both in gardens or grass. The birds will be voracious eaters if you don't protect your seedlings.

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☐ WEAR green on March 17 and pin a clover on your collar or the banshees will be coming for you.

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☐ BUY packets of seeds for vegetables, vines, herbs and flowers from companies you trust. Look for heirloom varieties and non-GMO. There are many companies to choose from including Renee's Garden, Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds, Plant Delights Nursery, White Flower Farm, Select Seeds and many others.

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☐ CONTINUE to collect fallen camellias until the end of the blooming season. Do not let the dying or dead flowers remain on the ground or you'll jeopardize the mother plant.

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☐ PRE-ORDER my forthcoming garden book, "Growing with the Goddess Gardener," Book I in the Garden Shorts Series. All pre-orders will receive extra goodies such as heirloom seeds, bookmarks and more. Email me for details, [Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com](mailto:Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com). Twenty-five percent of the proceeds benefit the 501c3 Be the Star You Are! charity.

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☐ RELEASE your perfection attitude in the garden. Take your cues from the chaos that is nature. Let it go and let it grow!

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☐ SING a lullaby, dream of castles, kiss the Blarney Stone, and celebrate the vernal equinox with an Irish jig.

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☐ CONGRATULATIONS to Andy and Wendy Scheck for 10 years of stellar publishing of the Lamorinda Weekly. I am honored and grateful to be a part of this elite writing team. Our community is better because of this newspaper. Thank you!

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Shamrock



A close up of the Peace Lily.



Red-veined dock, part of the Rumex genus, is an edible lemony-tasting sorrel.



The bright blooms of crocosimias.



Raised beds with edible greens and lettuces.





A bed of Baby Tears.



(c)2017 Cynthia Brian, The Goddess Gardener, is a New York Times best selling author, actor, radio personality, speaker, media and writing coach as well as the Founder and Executive Director of Be the Star You Are1(r) 501 c3. Tune into Cynthia's Radio show at [www.StarStyleRadio.net](http://www.StarStyleRadio.net) Available for hire for any project. [Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com](mailto:Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com) [www.GoddessGardener.com](http://www.GoddessGardener.com) 925-377-STAR

Reach the reporter at: [info@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:info@lamorindaweekly.com)

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