

## July Gardening Guide

# Be a Flower Child

By Cynthia Brian

*“If you’re going to San Francisco... Be sure to wear some flowers in your hair” – written by John Phillips of The Mamas & the Papas, sung by Scott McKenzie*

In the summer of 1967 over 100,000 young people descended upon San Francisco, Golden Gate Park, and the Haight-Ashbury area to experience a season of love, peace, sex, drugs, and rock ‘n’ roll. The Summer of Love, as this counterculture revolution was called, celebrated with free concerts, performances, protests and flowers. I was never a hippie, but I’ve always been a flower child.

This month as we reminisce about 50 years of the “make love, not war” movement, I put on my beads, headband, rose-colored granny glasses, and wore flowers in my hair as I planned the July Gardening Guide. No drugs are necessary to enjoy a euphoric trip down memory lane when the garden is brimming with colorful and edible specimens ... magic mushrooms excluded. A romp on the wild side was a fun diversion as I plucked my first juicy tomatoes while watching the iridescent wings of the yellow swallowtails flutter between the violet blossoms of thyme and the budding tomatillos. Bees are swarming the lavender and rosemary gathering nectar for their honeycombs. Because of the heat, I continue to rescue bees and ladybugs that have landed in my fountains. My clematis is chock full of large deep amethyst-hued blooms glittering in the sunlight. Pink and white striped morning glory zigs and zags through the golden euphorbia, opening with the sunrise and closing at sunset. Not to be outdone, deep pink sword lilies, commonly known as gladioli, have unfurled their ruffled one-sided spikes amidst the blush Bonica and Dolly Parton roses. The kaleidoscope combination of forms, textures, shades and scents throughout the landscape add a mesmerizing jolt of joy to each moment.

When I’m ready to relax, I only have to venture into my orchard where the daisy-like florets of the chamomile make for a calming tea, especially enhanced with a squirt of juice from my tangelos. Another excellent medicinal tea is made from foraging for red clover, a wild perennial rich in magnesium, potassium, vitamin C and calcium. The red or pink flowers have a mildly sweet flavor and are often used to ease stomach discomfort or menopausal symptoms such as hot flashes. The leaves taste like alfalfa sprouts and can be tossed into salads along with dandelions, sautéed, or added to soups. If I’m in the mood for something a bit stronger, it’s always fun to muddle the mint into a mojito or mint julep!

Soon the fireworks of the Fourth of July will be flaring, filling the night sky with the exploding whirls and swirls circa a 1960s acid-dropping experience. Go into your garden, pick a few blooms, and wear flowers in your hair. If you are a gardener, you are a flower child. Welcome to a beautiful summer of love!

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*Red clover blossoms are nutritious and some say pain relieving.*

*Photos Cynthia Brian*



*Clematis, a prolific bloomer, lasts about two weeks as a cut flower.*