

# Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for July

- MINIMIZE back strain by keeping your back straight, not hunched, while planting or weeding. Avoid twisting and reaching overhead.
- CREATE walking paths with gravel, stepping stones or bricks throughout your landscape so that you never compress the soil of your planted beds by walking in them.
- SUPPRESS weeds, retain moisture, and keep a consistent temperature in your soil by adding four inches of compost or mulch around your plants. No need to turn under the compost or mulch.
- PICK tomatoes just as they form a hint of color allowing them to ripen on your countertops. This prevents them from being eaten by birds and insects. Never refrigerate tomatoes as they lose their flavor.
- GET FREE recycled water, up to 300 gallons per trip, from Central San. Visit [www.CentralSan.org](http://www.CentralSan.org). You'll need to fill out an application and bring your own containers. Central San notes that water is very heavy at eight pounds per gallon and is not to be consumed or allowed into storm drains.
- CLEAR away weeds, grasses, dead vegetation, limbs, pine needles, leaves and debris from all areas around your house to safeguard your home from embers. It's fire season and we need to be vigilant to reduce fire fuel laddering.
- CUT a bouquet of roses for a punch of stimulation. Sunset colors are perfect for summer.
- DECORATE your dinner parties with edible flowers including pansy, elderberry, calendula, chamomile, clover, daisy, nasturtium, rose, snapdragon and violets. Most herb and fruit tree blossoms are also edible including apple, banana, basil, chives, citrus, peach, pea, pear, pineapple guava, pumpkin, radish, rosemary, sage, squash, sunflower and thyme.
- IRRIGATE early in the morning or late evening. Remember to water deeply and less frequently.
- DEEP soak redwoods and magnolias before signs of stress appear, or their roots will surface.
- EMPLOY successive planting techniques to continue your crops of lettuce, radish, carrots and greens. Every three weeks, plant more seeds as you clip and harvest for continual fresh eating through autumn.
- REPEL pests and predators while attracting beneficial pollinators by planting aromatic herbs including rosemary, basil, cilantro, sage, fennel and thyme.
- ORGANIZE a flower power photo scavenger hunt. Provide a list of 10 unusual specimens growing in your garden. Invite friends to find and photograph them for a special prize, perhaps a pot of petunias or a basket filled with gardening tools.
- CONGRATULATE yourself on being a gardener. You are an authentic flower child.

Enjoy a safe and electrifying Independence Day! Embrace your free spirit, dance under the stars, and salute the sunshine as you relish a stellar summer of love.

Happy Gardening and Happy Growing!

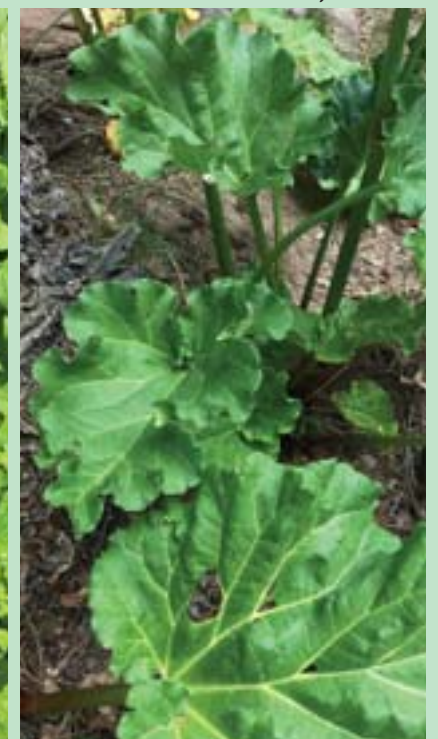


*The first tomatoes of the summer proclaim a bountiful forthcoming season of juiciness.*

*Photos Cynthia Brian*



*Take a break to muddle fresh mint into mojitos or mint juleps.*



*hubarb stalks are almost ready for harvesting. Cook only the stalks as the leaves are poisonous.*