

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Sow spring

By Cynthia Brian

“All through the long winter I dream of my garden. On the first warm day of Spring I dig my fingers deep into the soft earth. I can feel its energy, and my spirits soar.” – Helen Hayes



A cover crop of mustard prepares the soil for sowing.

Photos Cynthia Brian

My cell rang as I juggled to open the front door, arms filled with books. I pressed the speaker button and in the few seconds it took me to say “hello” my daughter’s excited voice chimed, “Mom, I hear the frogs singing. It’s springtime!”

As winter bids farewell, the male troubadours “de printemps,” fill the early evening mist with their mating croaks to entice the females. Their call is joyous, raucous, and a welcome harbinger of new life. My garden has erupted in a cavalcade of color as one blossom after another unfurls its beauty. Cherries, chestnut, plum, crabapple, Asian pear, Western red bud and tulip magnolia are magnificent with their new wardrobes of rose, white, pink and purple. The feathery fronds of fennel glisten in the sunlight. The fragrance of freesia, narcissi, and stock perfume the atmosphere. Periwinkle, also known as vinca, enhances garden beds with its tiny blue flowers. Even my roses are blooming earlier than normal. Hellebores, more commonly called Lenten roses, inject the earthy colors of browns and grays into the landscape. As their spring sepals emerge, vibrant hues of purple, green, blue, lavender, red and pink brighten shady gardens, eventually fading in color variation.

It seems that all of nature has been holding its breath until the frogs returned cueing the melodic symphony of nature.

On the first 70-degree weather day, I was outside in my bikini and shorts digging in the dirt. Thickets of weeds sprouted after the recent rains. The good news is that they are easy to pull with the dampness of the soil. If you planted cover crops, it is time to turn them under. Once weeds are eradicated, rake the ground before scattering seeds. I’m a fan of California poppies, not only for their shimmering range of sherbet colors, but also because they tolerate extremes in weather, are resistant to deer munchies, and reseed easily. Even the recent hailstorm won’t adversely affect poppies. As soon as you can work the ground, sow seeds directly into well-drained beds and plant in full sun. Even if the weather is cool, poppies can handle light frost, so sow now! If you haven’t amended your soil with compost, you may need to fertilize. Keep the soil moist then thin seedlings to about six inches apart to allow for the plants to flourish.

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