

Cynthia Brian's Monthly Tips for September

TREAT balconies, rooftops, and porches like outdoor rooms. Define the space, add robust colors, comfortable furnishings, and an element of shade.

ELIMINATE sugar and artificial sweeteners from your diet. Plant stevia, a natural sweet herb that is a healthy sugar substitute.

MAINTAIN optimum health by adding superstar foods to your vegetable garden including sweet potatoes, broccoli, watermelon, butternut squash, and numerous leafy greens including mustard, kale, collards, spinach and Swiss chard.

DIVIDE overgrown perennials beds after the flowers have finished blooming. Plant the divisions in other areas of your yard or share with friends or a garden club.

FERTILIZE roses, azaleas, rhododendrons, fuchsias and camelias.

CUT bouquets of Naked Ladies and bougainvillea to use in flower arrangements. Flowers last about a week to 10 days.

SOAK the heads of hydrangeas in a bucket of water after cutting. Hydrangeas drink from the top. Spray bouquets with water once a day to keep the hydrangea flowers fresh looking.

HARVEST apples, grapes, figs, and Asian Pears as they ripen.

BUY bulbs for spring planting. Tulips, crocus and hyacinth will need to be refrigerated for six weeks before planting.

DETER squirrels and birds from devouring your green persimmons by netting the tree.

VISIT me and other contributors to my eighth book, "Be the Star You Are! Millennials to Boomers Celebrating the Gifts of Positive Voices in a Changing Digital World" at the Pear and Wine Festival on Saturday, Sept. 22 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Get your books autographed with sales benefitting literacy outreach projects. Information at <http://www.CynthiaBrian.com/books>. Thank you to Lamorinda Weekly for sponsoring.

BRING plants into your office. Exposure to living greenery has a calming effect and helps us be more productive. Many plants, such as the Peace Lily, also called the Sail Plant, emit antiviral, immune-boosting chemicals that clean the air and promote health.

GROW echinacea as a beautiful hardy perennial as an ornamental or for its medicinal qualities that are found in its root. Test the quality of the root by chewing a small piece. If your tongue tingles, the root can be used for making teas, tinctures, and toners.

ENLIST the assistance of a pest control professional if you find bats getting into your attic, garage or other space. Although they don't usually attack humans, they can carry rabies. On the positive side, bats are garden guardians and consume copious amounts of damaging insects.

RELISH the spectacular show of colorful crape myrtles this month as they grace driveways, gardens and town centers.

Savor the final days of summer. Autumn clean up is coming soon. Sharpen your spade and spade away!

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing.
Cynthia Brian



A bloom on the watermelon crape myrtle tree.



Bat on a screen door.



Raised beds with a chicken coop.