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## Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide

By Cynthia Brian



Apples are ripe and ready. Bobbing for apples was a game begun because of the goddess Pomona. Photos Cynthia Brian

pomegranate seeds guaranteeing that she would return to the darkness for one season a year. Demeter mourned that time which became known as winter but celebrated the previous season, autumn, by reaping the abundance of the crops.

Fall is considered a time to slow down, seek serenity, and soothe the sores of summer. It's a time of color changes, chillier temperatures and cooler temperaments. Most of all, we rejoice the fruits of our toils. October has also been a premier month for earthquakes, fires and financial failures. Be prepared as this fact is not a myth.

Purple loosestrife brightens gardens although it could easily become an invasive species. Keep an eye on yours if you have it cultivated. Grapes are being crushed into a new vintage, guavas are self-harvesting, apples are ready for bobbing, pistache and Japanese maple trees are blazing gold and crimson, begonias are in full bloom, and the final days of picking fresh produce from our vegetable gardens loom closer. As the French proverb states, "Autumn is the hush before winter."

The days are shorter, the nights become longer as we commence the holiday fetes of the forthcoming two months. Autumn is indeed delicious both literally and metaphorically. Decorate for a Trick-or-Treat party, prepare for Thanksgiving, and get ready for the Christmas and Hanukkah festivities of December with cuttings from your landscape.

Enjoy these final days of fluttering leaves and warm sunshine while indulging in the harvests and legends of fall.

Cynthia Brian's Mid-Month Gardening Guide for October

VISIT the library to find books relating to the myths, tales and legends of autumn.

BUY spring blooming bulbs including anemone, elephant ears, ranunculus, caladium, dahlia, freesia, shamrock and calla lilies.

DECORATE for All-Hallows Eve with corn stalks, gourds, pumpkins, apples and grasses.

BRING the outside in with green, air purifying houseplants such as dieffenbachia, fan palms, sail plant, fern and philodendron.

PLANT shrubs and ornamental trees for year around interest now to allow them to develop strong roots before winter dormancy. Consider hydrangea, lilac, forsythia and viburnum.

ELEVATE your garden with climbers of wisteria, clematis, sweet pea and climbing hydrangea.

COMPOST leaves, grass cuttings, and fall debris to reinvigorate your spring soil.

DIVIDE ornamental grasses that have a dead center with a ring of living green. They need to be reinvigorated.

HARVEST apples, tomatillos, tomatoes, eggplant, squash and grapes.

COLLECT baskets of self-harvested guavas that have fallen to make autumn desserts.

CUT kale leaves as needed. Collect seed pods to plant.

"Delicious autumn! My very soul is wedded to it." - George Elliot

Fall is filled with legends, myths, fairs and festivals, all celebrating the bounty from various cultures around the world. Pomona was the Roman goddess of apples. Bacchus, the Roman god of grapes, and his Greek counterpart, Dionysus, taught humans how to make wine. Many Native American tribes traditionally held special autumn dances to celebrate the corn harvest and the Hopi considered this the most auspicious time of the year for weddings. The Chinese and Vietnamese commemorate farmers and family reunions with Moon festivals, lotus seed paste-filled moon-cakes, and retelling of folk tales. The ancient Celts, who lived 2,000 years ago, marked the end of the harvest with the festival of Samhain, the origin of our Halloween.

In my 20s, I was booked as a model by a talent agency named Demeter. Having always been fascinated by Greek mythology, I revisited my history books for a refresher lesson.

Demeter, the sister of Zeus, Poseidon and Hades, was the goddess of the harvest, agriculture and grain. After her daughter Persephone was abducted by Hades and brought to the underworld, Demeter wandered the earth heartbroken, refusing to allow crops to grow. Being king of the gods, Zeus knew he had to intervene or everyone would starve so he sent Hermes to Hades to bring Persephone home. Before she left to see her mother, Hades tricked Persephone into eating a few

PRUNE dead branches from trees, especially deciduous trees such as Japanese maple and evergreens such as redwoods to encourage new growth.

STOMP on the mounds of moles that may be invading your lawn or building tunnels along your sidewalks. Although moles don't eat plants, they do destroy the beauty of the soil with their burrowing for grubs, beetles, worms, and insects. If you are wondering if you have moles or gophers, here's a tip: Gopher mounds are crescent shaped with an opening in the middle whereas moles leave a rounded, volcano-like pile of fluffy dirt without an exit aperture. Both are territorial and destructive, however, gophers are worse because they eat your plants and the roots. Eradicate moles by collapsing their channels. Stomp away!

SEED your lawn with Pearls Premium that grows deep roots and is a water saver. Use code STAR20 at checkout for a 20 percent discount at [www.PearlsPremium.com](http://www.PearlsPremium.com). Discount extended to Oct. 31.

MAKE an emergency "go bag" as fires or other disasters can strike at any time.

CREATE an arrangement or floral bouquet in pink honoring Breast Cancer Month.

SCHEDULE a garden consult with me, your guide on the side, before you put your yard to bed for the winter. Email [Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com](mailto:Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com).

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing.

Cynthia Brian



Dinosaur lacinto kale can be grown all year.



Tomato plants look ugly, but the fruit is super sweet. Photos Cynthia Brian



Tomatillos are ready for salsa.



Guavas are self-harvesting, meaning they fall to the ground when ready to eat. Photos Cynthia Brian



A mole hole and trail along the alyssum and lawn.



Elevate your garden by scattering seeds of perennial sweet peas.



A container planted with pistache turns bright crimson.



Cynthia Brian salutes with her favorites: flowers, fountains, and wine!

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