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Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

By Cynthia Brian



A spectacular gnarly lacey Japanese maple tree is full fall attire. Photo Cynthia Brian

"Gratitude is the fairest blossom which springs from the soul." - Henry Ward Beecher

As I was admiring the crimson leaves fluttering to the ground from the liquid amber tree, I was overcome with gratitude for our distinct California seasons. How boring life would be if every day and every thing remained constant, unaltered, impervious to transformation.

November ushers a time for reflection, providing the perfect opportunity to express our gratitude for being alive in a rapidly changing world. The days are shorter and the nights are cooler. Waiting for the rain to materialize, we begin our cleanup in our fall landscapes. It's time to rake the leaves, mulch the garden and sharpen tools. Soon we'll be covering our patio furniture or storing it until summer. Frost intolerant plants must be blanketed or if in containers moved to warmer locations. Persimmons can be harvested with the Hachiya variety left on countertops to soften. Holly berries begin turning their vibrant red, a final hedge pruning is necessitated, and spring-flowering bulbs require planting. In preparation for our Thanksgiving gathering, we decorate with pumpkins, colorful Indian corn, gourds and autumn leaves. The magic of the holidays has begun.

How can we cultivate thankfulness? Create your personal guided meditation. Take a walk in nature to drink in the beauty. Be watchful. I heard fluttering of

wings and watched with glee as a large crow landed in a tree a few feet from me, completely oblivious to my presence. I whispered, "Thank you." Listen closely. Do you hear any of the creek frogs beginning their wooing sounds? Are the squirrels chirping and cooing as they gather acorns and nuts for the winter? Say, "Thank you." Are the leaves on your Japanese maples, crape myrtles, or pistaches turned into jewel tones of saffron, ruby and ginger? Utter, "Thank you."

We take for granted so many things in life. By starting to be grateful for the simple essentials such as running water, electricity, clean air, a cozy bed, food on the table and people who love us, we can begin a daily routine of being grateful. Add appreciation to the plants and trees that grace your garden providing privacy, flowers, fragrance, shade, food and stress relief, and you'll take the first step on your journey of gratitude.

Before long we will be putting our gardens to bed and our tools in the shed. For the moment, the sun is shining and we are blessed to live in a climate that allows us a long growing period filled with healthy outdoor activities.

This year when you celebrate the American ritual of Thanksgiving, mulch your mind by living every day with mindful thankfulness. Harvest the riches of gratefulness.

"As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them." - John Fitzgerald Kennedy

Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for November

CHECK out Jackson & Perkins catalog celebrating their 130-year anniversary. They have created a special rose to mark the occasion, Four Roses Bourbon, a graceful deep red heat-tolerant specimen that is easy to grow and resistant to disease. Through Dec. 31 get free shipping on orders of \$75 or more with coupon code LAPARK at <http://www.jacksonandperkins.com> or 20 percent off order with code SHARE20.

DECORATE with flint corn, also known as Indian corn. The kernels are "hard as flint" and come in colors of red, blue, black, white and yellow. This corn is edible and used in polenta and hominy.

TRAIN fig, apple, rose and Eureka lemons to grow on an espalier on a fence.

PRIVACY is critical to our relaxation. As privacy screens plant a laurel or holly hedge. Prune to your desired height and width.

HARVEST Fuyu and Hachiya persimmons. Fuyu, commonly called "apple persimmons," can be sliced and diced into salads and eaten raw. Hachiya persimmons need to be very soft and mushy before consuming. It's best to pick them now before the birds and squirrels ravage the crop.

BUY copies of "Be the Star You Are! Millennials to Boomers Celebrating Positive Voices in a Changing Digital World and Growing with the Goddess Gardener" to give as holiday gifts. Pick up at StarStyle(r) studios or enjoy free shipping. Available at www.CynthiaBrian.com/online-store.

WALK in the woods to witness the halt to chlorophyll production in the leaves of the trees. Gather a bag of the colorful autumn treasures for your Thanksgiving table.

ENJOY the warm sunshine and cool breezes of November. Winter is coming.

DIG holes for your spring bulbs and cover. If you have clumps of iris or Naked Ladies that need

dividing and replanting, this is the month for the task.

FEED annuals and lawns with a fertilizer high in nitrogen.

PLANT groundcovers and deciduous trees that boast fall wardrobes. Your local nurseries have a plethora of suggestions and selections.

FINAL chance to sow garlic and onions for next season's dining of Mediterranean staples.

BE grateful for today.

Take time to give thanks for the little things every day, not just once a year. Having an attitude of gratitude makes every moment shine brightly.

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing. Happy Thanksgiving!

Cynthia Brian



A privacy screen hedge of holly with green berries on the verge of turning red. Photos Cynthia Brian



Harvested bulbs waiting to be planted.



An espalier of apples or other fruits adds interest to a wall or fence. Photos Cynthia Brian



Hachiya persimmons need to be harvested before the birds and squirrels devour them.



Close up of a laurel hedge.



Cynthia Brian is happy with the grape harvest.

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