

Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

Cultivating thankfulness

By 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.



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

Photo Cynthia Brian

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.”

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