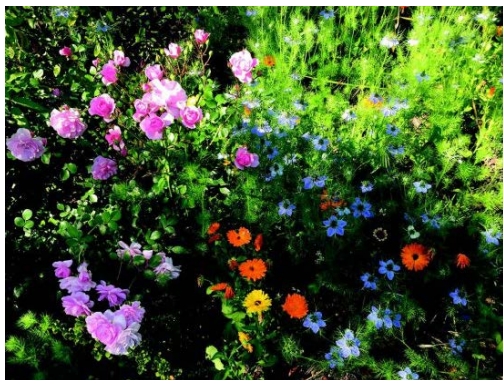


Published June 12th, 2019

## Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

By Cynthia Brian



A grouping of roses, calendula, and Nigella offers scents of summer. Photo Cynthia Brian

"As the scent to the rose, are those memories to me." - Amelia C. Welby

Cooler weather has bidden a sweet goodbye, and warmer days beckon us to linger outdoors. My garden is ablaze with blooms and the aromas of scrumptious scents. My daughter Heather Brittany, also an avid gardener, is visiting and wants to learn more by walking through the landscape with me. However, on this occasion, I am the student and she is the teacher as we stroll through the perfumed botanicals. Heather is a sommelier, a trained and knowledgeable wine professional working in an elite and innovative winery in Temecula.

With a glass of vino in hand and several varietals opened on the patio, she crushes leaves and pinches petals informing me of the subtle flavors we may be experiencing as we sip our way through the backyard.

We pick nasturtium, rose, mint, mock orange, cherry, lambs ear, calendula, Nigella, lemongrass, fennel and a sliver of an olive branch. We stick our noses in lilies, lavender and jasmine, inhaling deeply. We scoop a handful of soil and mulch to draw in the aromas of nature. Rosemary, sage, thyme, chervil, parsley, oregano and bay. I haven't ever thought of them as essences of wine. At each stop, she encourages me to stop, breathe in, and imagine. "Touch the lambs ear. Feel the velvety finish of the Queen Elizabeth rose. Take a bite of fennel. Slow down. What do you see? What do you smell? What do you feel? What do you taste?"

I was born and groomed in the vineyards of Napa Valley where I learned farming and gardening skills from my parents and grandparents, yet I've never ambled in my private gardens equating my flowers and herbs with the wine I consume. Often I've been told that as a writer, I should be crafting the verbiage on wine labels. What has kept me from being creative in that format are some of the normal descriptions that I read on bottles. Leather, tar, asphalt, and tobacco are not ingredients that I choose to imbibe. But here, in my garden, I understand. We luxuriate in the multitude of floral opportunities to discover the subtleties of the fruit of the vine.

A whiff of a barnyard reminds me of my childhood riding horses, tending sheep, branding cattle, and raising chickens. Pine and redwood needles evoke the memories of Christmas. A shaving of St. Lucia nutmeg makes me nostalgic for Thanksgiving. Narcissus and jasmine are the smells of spring.

The sweet stench of aged compost and sensational swathes of fragrant roses and perfumed lavender offer spectacular sights and spice to the summer garden.

On our way back to the house we watch a small sparrow flit from my pine wreath at the back door. Upon careful inspection, we witness three tiny eggs nestled in a nest. We shoot a photo to remember our afternoon lesson. What a fitting finale from our spring into summer sipping expedition!

Pour yourself a glass of Bacchus's favorite beverage and walk around your garden indulging your senses with scents and memories. Slow down. What do you see? What do you smell? What do you feel? What do you taste? Sip into summer!

Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for June

PRUNE daffodils, tulips, hyacinths, bluebells, freesias, and other bulbs once the leaves have turned crispy yellow.

ADD companion plantings of Oriental poppies, allium, delphinium, daylilies, salvia and peony.

PHOTOGRAPH eggs in a bird's nest, but don't disturb the nest. The mother bird is alert and watching.

CELEBRATE National Pollinator Week June 17-23 by planting three new pollinator plants that will attract bees, butterflies, and birds. Try Nigella (love-in-a-mist), bee balm and fennel.

DIVIDE perennials before the weather is too warm. Alstroemeria, hosta, yarrow, aster and astilbe.

Most perennials need dividing every three to four years to maintain annual blooms.

ADD three inches of mulch to your garden. If you have pine or redwood trees, gather the needles to mulch your roses, azaleas, rhododendrons, fuchsias, and other acid-loving plants. The mulch will keep the plants cooler and maintain moisture.

CONTAIN all mints in pots with saucers. Spearmint, peppermint, pineapple mint, catnip, and the rest of the mint family can easily become invasive when planted in the ground.

DEADHEAD roses at least weekly to encourage continual blooming.

BAIT for snails and slugs.

PLANT annuals in blocks of odd numbers-three, five, seven, nine, or more to create a more natural and aesthetically pleasing look to the human eye. To achieve this, you can plant the same variety of flowers in each odd grouping, or you can create color blocks with several similar varieties.

CUT bouquets of alstroemeria flowers for two weeks of vase life enjoyment.

WALK through your garden to savor the scents of a variety of plants.

PICK cherries as they ripen before the birds eat them all.

DO a second planting of beets, chard, beans, and radishes.

LISTEN to the serenading of the bullfrogs as they seduce with their song.

REPEL mosquitoes by emptying all vessels containing even a few drops of water. Add Dunksr to ponds or non-circulating water sources. Citronella and lemongrass plants supposedly help placed on the patio.

POUR a glass of wine and decipher the flavors that emanate from the garden.

COMMEMORATE dad on Father's Day with a gift from the garden and include a copy of my book, "Growing with the Goddess Gardener" available at <http://www.CynthiaBrian.com/online-store>.

CELEBRATE the summer solstice on June 21 with a controlled and safe bonfire. Did you know that the word "bonfire" derived from the words "bone fire" because bones were burned to make lime to sweeten the soil? In years past, bone fires, or bonfires were beacons to guide travelers on land and sea.

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing. Happy Daddy's Day!



Velvety lambs ear in bloom attracts pollinators,



Drought resistant Graptopoveria succulent cascades from a container.



The flowers on an olive tree have no scent.



Cut alstroemeria flowers for a bouquet that will last two weeks.



Stick your nose in a patch of sweet-smelling Oriental lilies.



Cynthia Brian and Heather Brittany in a barnyard. Cynthia Brian, The Goddess Gardener, raised in the vineyards of Napa County, is a New York Times best-selling author, actor, radio personality, speaker, media and writing coach as well as the Founder and Executive Director of Be the Star You Are! 501 c3. Tune into Cynthia's Radio show and order her books at [www.StarStyleRadio.com](http://www.StarStyleRadio.com). Buy a copy of her books, Growing with the Goddess Gardener, Chicken Soup for the Gardener's Soul, and Be the Star You Are! Millennials to Boomers at [www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store](http://www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store). Hire Cynthia for projects, consults, and lectures. [Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com](mailto:Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com) [www.GoddessGardener.com](http://www.GoddessGardener.com)

Reach the reporter at: [info@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:info@lamorindaweekly.com)

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA