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## Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

By Cynthia Brian



Colorful succulent flowers Photo Cynthia Brian

"Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul"- John Muir

How often are you outdoors? Are you spending most of your time sitting in a chair staring at your computer screen? Do you feel lethargic, tired and anxious?

You are not alone and help could be right outside your door. In today's technological world, many people, including children, are increasingly living their lives indoors. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 20% of children (one in five) and 30% of adults (one in three) in the United States are obese.

Back in 2005 when I was doing my weekly radio broadcast, StarStyler-Be the Star You Are!r (www.StarStyleRadio.com) on World Talk Radio out of studios in San Diego, I invited author Richard Louv to be a guest on my program with his newest hardbound book

at the time, "Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder." Before the program, we sat in the sound booth lamenting the startling facts that the average child of the day could identify TV personalities yet knew nothing about bugs, flowers, trees, or nature in general. Kids were not outside playing as we did as children because they wanted to be plugged in and tuned out. His book and the interview have remained lodged in my psyche as a warning that we don't want our child to be the last to witness the woods.

Fast forward to 2019 and although nature-deficit disorder is not an official medical disease, children and adults are more alienated from nature than ever before with increased attention difficulties, higher stress levels, poorer body image, obesity issues, and a plethora of physical and emotional illnesses. Pills have been prescribed yet people are sicker.

Could spending more time in nature be the answer to our woes?

Physicians throughout the ages have encouraged people to go outside more. Hippocrates wrote that walking was "man's best medicine." To ward off aging, physicians in the Han dynasty suggested outdoor "frolicking exercises." In the 19th and 20th centuries, people were instructed to visit the mountains to enjoy the "magic airs" or "take in the waters" at a mineral spring to mitigate a variety of infirmities.

Science supports the fact that exposure to natural stimuli, especially gardening, lowers blood pressure, bolsters immune systems, reduces the levels of stress hormones, improves our disposition, increases confidence, promotes healing, lessens inflammation, minimizes obesity problems, and decreases our dependence on pain medication.

Besides having fun, a brisk walk in the park three or four times a week may stave off cognitive impairment for older adults. For kids, the exercise and fresh air of playing will help with maintaining a healthy weight as well as heighten their cognizance of the natural world. Community gardens offer people an opportunity to commune together to grow and harvest fresh food promoting better health.

Nature is a healer. For me, my garden is my happy place, my refuge, and my innovator. I get all my best ideas for my endeavors while outside listening, watching, tasting, feeling, exploring, experiencing, doing and being. Right outside my office, a beautiful redheaded house finch perches on my gurgling fountain singing his heart out daily. The frogs croaking, the buzzing bees, the wind in the palms, the scent of the star jasmine, the rustling magnolia leaves, the beauty of blossoms, the trickle of the water, the cooing of the doves and the chants of the quail activate my imagination and soothe my soul. The repeated refrains of Mother Nature are my nurture and my medicine.

It won't be long before physicians everywhere will be writing prescriptions for parks instead of painkillers. Being in the outdoors inspires awe and wonder. We are blessed to have an abundance of open space, meadows, trails, mountains, and local parks where we can experience the tranquility and magic of the outdoors.

It's summer. Nature is calling. Get up, get out, and welcome the fresh air. Spend more time in a garden or a commons. See for yourself how you feel. Although I'm not a doctor, I am prescribing more parks instead of pills. There is no downside.

"All my hurts my garden spade can heal." - Ralph Waldo Emerson

Cynthia Brian's Garden Goddess Guide for Increasing Health Through Nature IMPROVE physical skills for kids by getting them to play outside more.

BUY a supersize bubble wand and blow bubbles in the yard.

EAT healthier with a Mediterranean diet loaded with freshly harvested vegetables and fruits.

SOURCE produce hyper-locally at your Farmers' Market or rural fruit stands if you are not growing your own. Summer is the optimum time for the freshest fruits and vegetables with high nutritional values. Did you know that the USDA defines purchasing local produce and food as within 400 miles of your state? Most food on the American dinner table has traveled between 1,500-2,500 miles, according to the Worldwatch Institute meaning that nutrients and antioxidants have been diminished. If you really want to

pack a punch with your food, you have options. Eating in season while growing your own or being part of a community garden is the number one solution. Frequenting farmers' markets will reduce your carbon footprint and offer fresher alternatives. Or take a drive to a local farming community to purchase freshly harvest crops at road stands. This serves a dual purpose of getting you out into nature as an RX for better health and stocking your kitchen with food that will be delicious and nutritious.

FLOAT bougainvilleas blooms as a creative centerpiece.

SOAK your tired feet in a bowl of warm water filled with healing marigolds and chrysanthemums.

COOL off on a cushion of green moss.

EXPRESS awe at a dragonfly hovering on a reed in the water.

ENLIGHTEN your perspective with a copy of "Last Child in the Woods" by Richard Louv.

PICK chamomile flowers to make a soothing tea. Save some of the seeds to plant.

INSTALL a birdhouse and a fountain to entice the songbirds.

WANDER through a colorful succulent garden to see the various textures and forms.

WONDER at the sight of a flower that you've never seen before.

SOAK in the beauty of the delicate blossoms on a silk tree.

GAZE at the clouds and be grateful for your health.

DRINK plenty of water to stay hydrated.

LISTEN to the sounds of our beautiful earth to experience calm.

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing!



Create a bucolic space with a gazing ball, birdbaths, and birdhouse. Photos Cynthia Brian



A dragonfly rests on a reed. Photos Cynthia Brian



Float bougainvilleas bloom as a creative centerpiece.



The delicate fronds and flowers of a silk tree.



Wander through a colorful succulent garden.



Nasturtiums are beautiful, edible and nutritious.



A field of charming and restorative chamomile.



Cynthia welcomes you to summer gardening. 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! Tune into Cynthia's Radio show and order her books at [www.StarStyleRadio.com](http://www.StarStyleRadio.com). Buy a copy of her new books, Growing with the Goddess Gardener 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)

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