

## Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

# Controlled chaos



Photo Cynthia Brian

An angel sitting on a plow's disk oversees the Naked ladies, roses, salvia, and *Plecostachys serpyllifolia*, aka "Little licorice."

### By Cynthia Brian

*"When you realize how perfect everything is you will tilt your head back and laugh at the sky."~ Buddha*

There is only one certainty in the garden: it is never finished. Gardens evolve, change, mutate, and metamorphose. A landscape that was once very ordered and manicured quickly turns into a tangled jungle without ongoing maintenance. With TLC, one can control the chaos to create a masterpiece.

The longer I garden, the more I enjoy the whimsical. What appears at first glance to be an imperfect arrangement is often the most excellent of combinations. Mixing the hydrangeas with the nasturtiums and heucheras adds an element of awe and

wonder. Discovering a vintage stone angel sitting on top of a plow's disk praying over the naked ladies, roses, salvia, dried nigella, and the silvery *plecostachys serpyllifolia* invites one to pinch a stem to smell the licorice plant. Wandering in a meadow filled with daisies, coneflowers, and perennial sweet peas rejuvenates the spirit.

Yes, I have embraced the controlled chaos of nature. Several years ago as an experiment, I planted wisteria, grapes, and pink bower vine on a pergola on my deck to see which of these three specimens would dominate. To my amazement, instead of choking one another, they have tangled together creating year-round interest. The wisteria blooms in spring and maintains green leaves until winter when it drops its

leaves. The grapevines leaf out in spring, bear edible fruit in fall, change leaf color when the weather turns cold, then showcase bare bark for the winter months. My pink bower vine is perennially green displaying pretty rose-colored petals with a deep cherry center from early summer to winter. What was deemed to be a mishmash of plants resulted in a happily married and visually pleasing grouping.

On my hillside, a mangle of chartreuse euphorbia intermingles with striped pink morning glory. The chaos is palpable yet stimulating. My friend Michael Curtis's garden is an exemplary model of perfection in controlled landscape chaos. Around every corner, one is greeted with a capricious element. Stroll along Surprise Avenue, be on the lookout for a locomotive in the ivy, and giggle at the numerous street signs lining the paths.

Creativity and enchantment reign when you invite the unexpected into your garden planning. Once you have controlled your chaos, you will look up and laugh at the sky.



Striped pink morning glories amidst a hillside of euphorbia.