

Lamorinda

OUR HOMES

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Home interior by Amanda Eck

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Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Garden garnishes



The bounty of vegetables and herbs are at their peak.

Photos Cynthia Brian

By Cynthia Brian

“Digging the garden, tending the weeds. Who could ask for more?” – John Lennon and Paul McCartney

Because I enjoy consuming copious amounts of greens, I have been called a rabbit. When I prepare meals, I use large quantities of herbs, leaves, and juices that emanate freshly harvested from my garden. Long ago my son deemed that I added “weeds” to my menus because basil, rosemary, sage, thyme, parsley, cilantro, oregano, fennel, mint, lovage, and, yes, the occasional weed, were ubiquitous. Years

before the craze of flavored waters hit the market, I was promoting what I called “weed water,” H₂O infused with fruits, juices and herbs. I began writing a recipe book and even bought the domain name of “weedwater.com,” which I later sold for a hefty profit to a producer of cannabis products.

All of which brings me to my topic of garden garnishes.

The quest for creating delicious and original cuisine and beverages is time-honored. If you have visited any upscale restaurants or taverns recently, you probably have witnessed the rebirth of mixology. Although local wines and craft

beers are always in fashion, adventurous infused spirits with herbs, fruits, berries, flowers and leaves have become the new rock stars.

You can concoct your own personalized beverages and also add a flair for the gourmet to your barbecues with ingredients from your garden. Many herbs including basil, cilantro and fennel are bolting in the heat. Cut back the flowers and enjoy them in your cooking or cocktails. With the flowers shorn, even on thyme and oregano, you’ll get a longer growing time. Cut up pieces of melon, cucumber, peaches, or other fruit to enhance your sparkling water. Sprigs of rosemary are great for skewers and barbecuing. Make sauces with unexpected mixtures. Putting flowers or fruit in ice trays makes tasty and pretty cubes for your drinks. Don’t be shy. Be inventive. Be creative. Take a risk.

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A bee pollinates a black-eyed Susan coneflower.