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## Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for November

By Cynthia Brian



Leaves on this maple are modeling their autumn wardrobe. Photos Cynthia Brian

"To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven." Ecclesiastes 3:1

With the power disruptions and fire fears of October in our rearview mirrors, we welcome November with open arms and grateful hearts. It won't be long before the rains arrive. Driving or walking throughout the region, we witness a marvelous display of fall foliage as leaves on many deciduous trees turn from green to tangerine to crimson before dropping to the ground.

Time to fertilize heavily. In autumn, plants quit sending minerals and water to leaves and blooms. The nutrients are instead directed to increase the roots while storing food for the winter months. We witness the foliage color change to our great delight

When you fertilize at this time of year, you'll be feeding your trees, shrubs, plants and lawns. This dormant feeding is crucial for the success of your garden for the following seasons. The roots are busy storing nourishment even though the above-ground growth has halted. It's best to do this heavy feeding after the first rain to assist the fertilizer to go deeper into the ground. The soil is still warm and will soak up the fertilizer.

Time to feed lawns. Lawns especially need fertilizing now. The blade growth has slowed, a signal that roots are digging deeper. Gradually start mowing your lawn shorter and fertilize heavily to prepare the grass for the long cold months ahead. There is still time

to aerate if your clay soil is compacted. After the first rain is a good time to reseed grass or install new sod. Make a personal batch of grass patch by mixing a bag of potting soil in a wheelbarrow with enough lawn seed until you see 20 or more seeds per handful. Scratch or till any bare patches, scatter the seed over the fresh soil, rake lightly, water, and wait for the seedlings to sprout. Keep the area damp until grass is established. Do not let it dry out.

Time to prune dead branches and rake leaves. No plant or tree is fireproof.

Dead branches, dry leaves, and grasses are highly flammable. Reduce fuel laddering by pruning trees 6-10 feet from the ground and several feet from roofs. A person should be able to walk under a tree without being hit by a branch. Clean out your gutters, eaves, porches and decks.

Time to watch for rodents and skunks. It's mating season for rodents and skunks. The recent fires have impacted wildlife movement allowing animals to migrate closer to residential development, including a plethora of rats. Vector Control Inspector Joe Cleope alerted me about the new procedures and protocols instigated in the district. Many people don't know that Vector Control is a free service. If you have a question or concern, please visit the website for assistance. <https://www.contracostamosquito.com>.

Time to plant garlic. Vampires may not like garlic, but foodies do! Planting just a dozen cloves will yield you a harvest of more than 120 cloves. A bulb has several cloves to break apart before planting in a sunny location in rich, well-drained soil. Put the pointy side up and the flat side down, cover the cloves with a layer of mulch, and they will multiply forming a new bulb. Harvesting will be late summer when the tops have yellowed. You can then tie or braid the stalks or cut the leaves above the bulb. Always save a large bulb for the next year of planting.

Time to harvest and eat pineapple guavas. Called feijoa, the fruit is self-harvesting. It falls from the tree when ripe, however, you can also pick the fruit. When cut, a fully ripened feijoa will have clear-colored jellied sections. If not ripe, put in a brown paper bag for a few days with an apple. Scoop out the sweet/tart jelly and eat raw or make jams, sauces, glazes, or add to salads. The perfume from the fruit is as delicious as the fruit!

Time to cut hydrangea blossoms. If you enjoy drying the flowers of hydrangeas, November is a perfect month to do so. If not, once the flowers fade, cut back the stems to encourage new growth.

Time to plant succulents. Succulents are drought and fire-resistant. Many boast beautiful flowers, unique shapes, and striped striations. Planting a selection in one designated area presents a bigger impact of form, texture and color.

Time to pick grapes. The crops of grapes have come to season's end. If you still have bunches hanging on the vine, take the opportunity to cut them to refrigerate or dehydrate. Use the red-hued leaves in your autumn decorations and place settings.

Time to give thanks. We all have so much for which to be grateful. As Thanksgiving nears, take time to express your appreciation for the blessings and gifts you have received. Remember the people in your life that have been there for you on all occasions . the good, the bad, and the ugly.

To everything there is a season and now is the time to turn, turn, turn.

Happy gardening. Happy growing.



Fibrous wax leaf begonias are still blooming. When flowers fade, cut back, but don't remove.



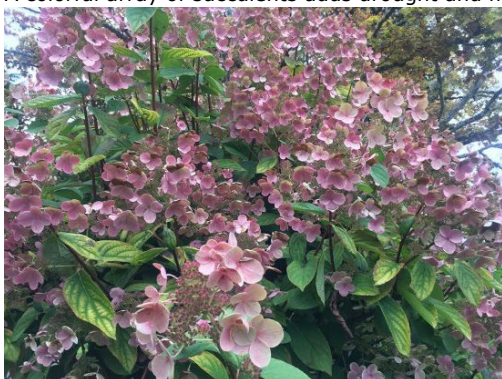
Brazilian feijoa pineapple guavas are self-harvesting. Scoop out the center to eat.



Fall leaves falling on pansies.



A colorful array of succulents adds drought and fire resistance to a garden.



Dainty pink lace cap hydrangeas make excellent dried arrangements.



Cynthia Brian takes a respite at the beach. 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!r 501 c3. Tune into Cynthia's StarStyler Radio Broadcast at [www.StarStyleRadio.com](http://www.StarStyleRadio.com). Buy a copy of her books, Growing with the Goddess Gardener and Be the Star You Are! Millennials to Boomers at [www.StarStyleStore.net](http://www.StarStyleStore.net) Hire Cynthia for writing projects, garden consults, and inspirational lectures. [Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com](mailto:Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com) [www.GoddessGardener.com](http://www.GoddessGardener.com)

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[back](#)

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