

## Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

### 'Tis the Season



Decorate with cuttings of cotoneaster, magnolia, and redwood leaves.

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On day four, I was raking the piles of colorful liquid amber leaves when I felt a sting in my leg. Then another shot of pain whisked through my jacket to my arm, followed by

my neck feeling on fire. Before I knew what had transpired, I was attacked by a swarm of yellowjackets. What? Yellowjackets in December? After tending to the painful and swollen sites with ice, a paste of baking soda and water, vinegar, and imbibing antihistamines, I called Vector Control. The rain needed to stop to effectively treat and destroy the nest. What I learned is that yellowjackets are the most aggressive at this time of year because the queen is laying eggs that will become more queens in the spring (see story on Page D1). Be cautious when raking, digging or pruning.

When day five arrived, I was ready to start my Christmas decorating. I cut branches from my redwood trees, clipped Chinese pistache, cotoneaster and pyracantha berries, sprayed painted my autumn gourds, and started creating holiday arrangements.

We had a morning of sunshine on day six so I pruned the deadwood from my fence perimeter oleanders. Don't let the pretty

flowers fool you. Although these Mediterranean specimens are easy to grow in almost any climate, every part of the oleander is poisonous to both animals and humans. Wear leather gloves when working with oleanders as the sap can cause severe allergic reactions and clean shears with bleach. Do not add the flowers, leaves, or branches to compost piles. Dispose of them to your trash secured in a plastic bag.

Day seven dawned dark, dreary, cold and wet. It was time to bring in my weathered wood, make a cup of hot cocoa, light a fire and read a book. Growing up on the farm without central heat, our only source of warmth in winter was a roaring fire. 'Tis the season to be jolly and cozy!

The rain continues to wash the spiders out!

Happy Holidays! Happy gardening!  
Happy Growing!



Santa Cynthia is ready to celebrate the season.

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 StarStyle® 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.cynthiabrian.com/online-store](http://www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store).

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