

## Cynthia Brian's End of December Gardening Guide

**BRING** branches from your evergreen trees inside to use as inexpensive holiday décor. The fresh fragrance gives your home a cozy, festive feeling.

**BAIT** for snails and slugs.

**ADD** lights to your bird houses and fountains.

**TREAT** all acid loving plants with sulfur to lower the soils pH.

**DECORATE** for the New Year with the red cones of the magnolia tree.

**REDUCE** erosion by leaving a vegetative cover or stubble from perennials in the soil. The decreased water runoff keeps contaminants like fertilizer and pesticides from our streams.

**GIVE** a gardening book to a gardener. Gardening books in the winter reminds us that spring will be here soon, so we need to get ready! Whether a master gardener or a novice, there's always something new to learn from "Growing with the Goddess Gardener" or "Chicken Soup for the Gardener's Soul" (we have hard-to-find, rare first editions) available at [www.CynthiaBrian.com/online-store](http://www.CynthiaBrian.com/online-store).

**CONTACT** Contra Costa Mosquito and Vector Control at (925) 685-9301 or [www.ContraCostaMosquito.com](http://www.ContraCostaMosquito.com) for education or if you have a problem with rats, mice, skunks, ticks, yellowjackets, and mosquitoes. The services are free as you've paid for them with your taxes.

**PRUNE** roses anytime you have time. Don't forget to root canes that you love in potting soil or offer them to other gardeners.

**FILL** a Santa hat with pinecones to give as a last-minute gift.

**FEED** the birds by allowing seedpods to form on perennials.

**FINISH** planting all spring blooming bulbs.

**DONATE** to your favorite charity. It is the season of giving. Mine, of course, is Be the Star You Are! (<http://www.bethestaryouare.org>)

**RIDE** around the town to admire all the holiday ornamentations of decorated houses and gardens.

**THANKS** for another great year together, gardening, laughing, inspiring and reading.

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing. Happy Christmas to all and to all a Good Night!



Cut a branch from a magnolia tree with red cones for a New Year decoration.



On a sunny wintery day, bottlebrush shines brightly.