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.

CONTACT Contra Costa Mosquito and Vector Control at (925) 685-9301 or www.ContraCostaMosquito.com for education or if you have a problem with rats, mice, skunks, ticks, yellowjackets, and mosquitoes. The services

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

are free as you've paid for them with your taxes.

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

FEED the birds by allowing seedpods to form on perennials.

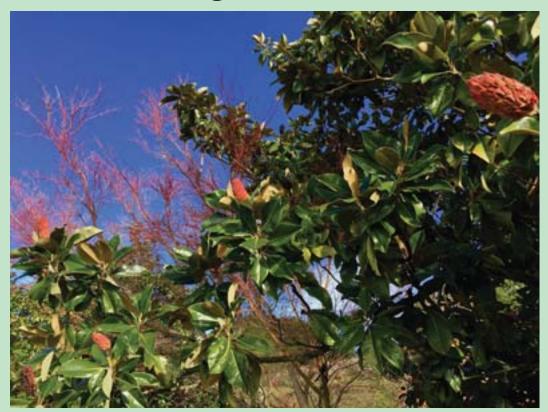
FINISH planting all spring blooming bulbs.

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.