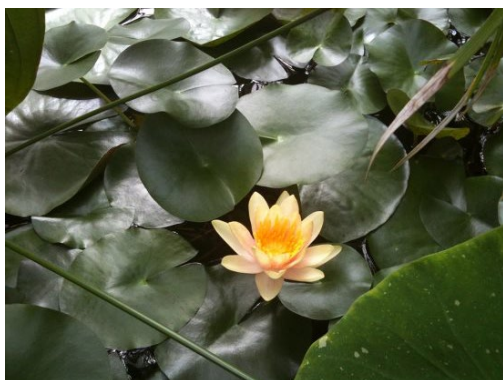


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Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

By Cynthia Brian



Water lilies oxygenate a pond or water source.
Photos Cynthia Brian

"A dreamer dreams that everyone else in his dream must awaken before he can awaken."

~ Ramana Maharshi

After my column, "The Power of RE" was published, I received numerous positive comments about how readers were implementing RE into their lives. It is gratifying to know that people read my articles, but I've always wondered what people do with the information they receive.

Orinda resident Kathy Boyle showed me. She wrote: "I was intrigued by your ideas in your Lamorinda Weekly article about the power of RE. As I was reading your article, I was envisioning those ideas in the context of gardening and recycling in my everyday life. But then that wonderful Cervantes quote inspired me to amplify the ideas to how I am trying to live my life, especially during these very odd times." ("Take a deep breath of life and consider how it should be lived." ~Miguel de Cervantes)

An elementary school resource specialist for 40 years, Kathy had learned the power and effectiveness of ideas being created as colorful bulletin boards for kids. Now in retirement, she uses doors, walls, windows, mirrors, and even the shower door as her special bulletin boards by designing colorful visual pages to inspire herself. She also crafts pocket cards to carry with her on her hikes in nature. Her innovations helped me re-imagine my dream for this second part in the 2020 Trends series. Thanks, Kathy for sharing your talents and for reaching out. Your art has reinvigorated me.

Green careers are on the rise. From Boomers to Generation Z, people are finally understanding the call of the wild. From watering vacation gardens to talking to struggling plants, jobs are waiting to be filled. Horticultural therapy and plant blogging can become full-time careers.

As our climate warms and more natural disasters occur, it is time for everyone to wake up to dream green.

Growing up on our farm, to be "dirt poor" meant that we had plenty of land, but not enough money. I remember the first time I visited New York City when I was 19 and witnessed tiny bags of "dirt" being sold for \$5 and more. I telephoned home and told my Daddy that we could be rich if we packaged and sold our acres of dirt. He responded that there was a big difference between soil and dirt in our century. Healthy soil is rich in vitamins, minerals and organic matter. Dirt doesn't have any nutritional value and isn't valuable for growing anything. Unfortunately, today soil has been stripped of its nutrients. Erosion and deforestation have washed away one-third of the world's topsoil. Crops are planted for yield, not for nutrition. According to the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization, if this negative trend doesn't retreat soon, organically rich soil will be eliminated by 2050.

We have to dream green.

By embracing regenerative gardening practices, changing methods of farming and forestry, we can mitigate carbon and reverse the damage. We need to rebuild soil with organic matter, restore degraded soil, and reduce runoff. By composting, cover cropping, and no-tilling practices we can conserve wildlife and return to native soil. People are waking up to sustainability and the importance of caring for our environment. Composting reduces household waste by 40%. By growing organically, we revitalize the soil naturally. Planting cover crops of alfalfa, clover, beans, and mustard will control weeds and add nutrients to the soil. When planted in lawns, clover adds nitrogen to the earth, eliminating the need for additional fertilizer.

What about the greening of indoor spaces? Houseplants are connecting people with nature while cleaning the indoor air. Many young people have less income and live in smaller spaces. Succulents, bromeliads, peace lilies, snake plants, aloes, and fiddleleaf fig are easy to grow and long-lasting. Taking a class, attending a seminar, or watching how-to videos on YouTube are all terrific ways to learn more about growing nature inside.

Pollution, pesticides, UV radiation, and climate change are all leading to the destruction of habitat for amphibians and wildlife. If your garden is silent, it is not healthy. We need the croaking of the frogs, singing of the birds, and the hooting of owls. They keep our gardens vital by dining on mosquitoes, beetles, snails, rats, gophers and other pests. Plant ferns near water sources to protect frogs, toads, and turtles. Submerge water lilies to oxygenate the water while providing cover.

Mushrooms are the trendy super-food of 2020. Some species of fungi eat plastic and could help with rapid plastic decomposition. Edible mushrooms can prevent or treat hundreds of conditions. Although you don't want to forage unless you are certain that a mushroom is not poisonous, if you want to grow mushrooms, inoculated logs can be purchased.

Being "woke" is a popular refrain these days. If we are going to dream green, we have to wake up to smell the roses. This is the year that we must conceive unique sustainable ideas so that we achieve a world where we can breathe, live, and enjoy.

Implement the power of RE and dream green.

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing.

Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for January

BE AWARE of coyotes. I have had numerous reports of coyotes jumping backyard fences or digging under them to grab cats, chickens, rabbits and small dogs. Since the autumn fires, food is sparse and the coyotes are roaming neighborhoods.

READ this Asbestos and Natural Disasters Guide that covers the impact of wildfires on structures made with asbestos:

www.asbestos.com/asbestos/natural-disasters/

California-specific: www.asbestos.com/states/california

DRY branches from tree trimmings for kindling.

BRIGHTEN your landscape, porch, or balcony by planting primroses which come in a variety of colors.

REPAIR broken pipes and irrigation systems while you have time.

PLANT bare root roses and fruit trees. Follow instructions on the packaging. Soak roots for a full 24 hours and cut off broken roots. Plant the bud union 3 inches above the ground.

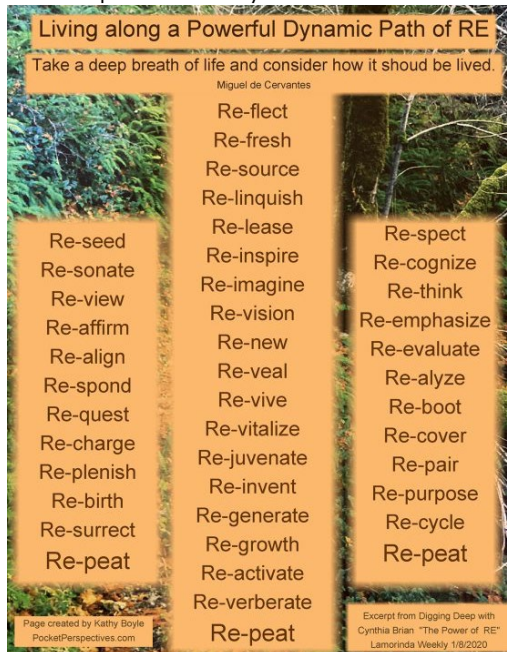
REPOT potted plants you received as gifts of the holiday. Remove wrapping to allow for good drainage. Trim spent blossoms, water, and fertilize regularly.

REEDUCATE yourself about mulch: www.akhomeshow.com/mulch-information-guide.php

REST. It is winter and time for a break. Sit by the fire on non-Spare the Air days. Drink hot cocoa or hot mulled wine. Dream a green dream.



Aloe is a plant that everyone needs as it heals burns and cuts. Photos Cynthia Brian



Aloe is a plant that everyone needs as it heals burns and cuts. Kathy Boyle's creative poster for The Power of RE. Photos Cynthia Brian



Red clover adds nitrogen naturally to lawns or wherever planted. Photos Cynthia Brian



Red clover adds nitrogen naturally to lawns or wherever planted. The peace lily, also known as a sail plant, boasts a white flower that resembles a sail. Photos Cynthia Brian



Ferns provide cover for frogs, toads, and turtles.



Rest and relax by the fire as Cynthia Brian does. 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

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