

## *Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian*

# Sweet, savory summer



**Cynthia's mom's Italian traditional tomato summer salad grown in the garden.**

... continued from Page D1

Plums are usually round, red or yellow, whereas prunes are oval-shaped and purple, almost blackish with a pit that dislodges easily. Plums and prunes are also related to cherries, peaches and almonds, all in the family *Prunus*. This season my cherry plums have a distinct flavor of peaches. My peaches aren't ripe, but they are planted close to the plums. Every year the taste varies. Because cherry plums are the size of cherries and quite crunchy when not over-ripe, I freeze a few and eat them like a popsicle. Sometimes I add the frozen plum to my beverage for an enlivening alternative to ice. I plan on dehydrating some of the prunes or drying them for future use.

My girlfriend, Nora, is a huge fan of black currants, also known as cassis. Over 30 years ago her dad gave her a cutting from their family currant shrub to plant in her garden. Harvesting the currants brings a sweet memory of the times she spent with her



**Crocosmia, the firecracker plant is a hummingbird magnet and great for cutting.**

doctor dad. This year's crop was profuse. She'll freeze a few cartons of these tasty, complex, and medicinally useful fruit for her family's winter enjoyment. My black currant flowers were prolific, yet my berries were disappointing. A handy tool for harvesting is a Scandinavian berry picker that eliminates having to pluck single berries one by one.

It wouldn't be summer without the sweet and savory ingredients of fresh-picked corn, cucumbers, and heirloom tomatoes. If you are not growing any, farmers' markets have bushels ready to buy. I soak the ears of corn with the husk on in a bucket of water for an hour, then, pull back part of the husks, lather with a basil-garlic butter, and steam them on the barbecue. Yummy! My mother's tomato salad has been a family tradition for ages. Slice heirloom tomatoes, red onions and cucumbers. Add chopped garlic and red, orange, or green bell peppers. Dress with olive oil, wine vinegar, and balsamic. Season to taste. Voila! A beautiful and scrumptious summer salad.



Photos Cynthia Brian

**Purple prunes hanging from the branch.**

Finally, don't forget to cut a few stems of "pretties" to add to a vase. Right now, the crocosmia or firecracker plant is in full bloom and makes a fantastic cut flower. Leave several in the garden for the hovering hummingbirds. Don't forget to refill fountains so that our bird friends can have a refreshing drink or bath.

Fire season is ramping up and with the recent winds, wildfires could easily ignite. Make sure to cut any tall grass or weeds, trim low hanging branches, clean gutters, and remove debris from around your property.

GardenComm: Garden Communicators International just notified me that I won the 2020 Media Awards Silver Medal of Achievement for a Journalism Newspaper Article, presented by out of 160 entries for my Lamorinda Weekly article, "Scary, scary night." I am honored for this major award and encourage you to have another look at that winning entry because it will help you prepare your landscaping for fire resistance.

... continued on next Page