



Lamorinda Home Sales

... read on Page D2

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener Cynthia Brian

Risky business



Photo Cynthia Brian

Even in a small window box, vegetables and flowers grow well together.

By Cynthia Brian

“Farming looks mighty easy when your plow is a pencil, and you’re a thousand miles from a cornfield.” ~ Dwight D. Eisenhower

When you bite into a crunchy apple, eat a bunch of juicy grapes, or slather butter on roasted sweet corn, unless you’ve grown these crops in your personal garden, do you ever wonder about the life of the farmer who provides you with your food? To grow healthy, nutritional produce, farmers work daily, rain or shine, in every season, to provide city dwellers with sustenance. They get paid when they sell their harvest, yet it only takes one natural disaster to destroy their year-long labors and erase the opportunity for remuneration.

Farming is a risky business.

A few times when I was a child, our family suffered the fate of a failed harvest. The culprit was usually a heavy rain mildewing the fruit before it could be picked. This year, the demon was the horrific fires with the unending days of suffocating smoke that smoke-tainted the grapes. One hundred percent of our Cabernet Sauvignon will hang on the vines to rot because they cannot be pressed and made into wine. The smoke-taint is so pervasive that the taste of eating a single grape is like licking an ashtray. Most growers of red grapes throughout Northern California are suffering the same fate. There will be no check in the mail. A full year of blood, sweat, and tears up in smoke, literally!

With global warming and climate change, farms are going to fail. Food insecurity will become more prevalent, even in abundant America. In the face of natural, financial, and social crisis, now more than ever, we all need to learn to be food resilient by reconnecting to the land and growing our own to supplement what we buy. Urban agriculture is a buffer to economic instability building resilience through biodiversity and organic gardening practices.

Autumn has arrived and with it the optimal time to plan before planting. Start small. Plant densely and use crop rotation for seasonal vegetables. Intermingle flowers and vegetables. Plants need water or they will suffer and die. Until the rains come, you will need to observe your plantings to ascertain that seeds and roots are not drying out. Before you begin your planting process, planning is essential.

... continued on Page D18