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Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener Cynthia Brian

By Cynthia Brian



Eat apples right from the tree. Photos Cynthia Brian

"Too blessed to be stressed!" ~ Bumper sticker

Are you feeling more in touch with Mother Earth as we near the beginning of eight months of stay-at-home mandates because of Covid-19? Or are you feeling antsy, stressed, and out-of-sorts? Retreating to our landscapes was initially a salve to the pain of the coronavirus, social unrest, and political nastiness as we encountered improved air quality, quieter skies, and increased bird activity. Then the California fires arrived bringing choking smoke, scorching heat, and black ash. An additional layer of frazzle to our daily lives multiplied because we were unable to spend time in our gardens or outdoors for any reason.

In normal times, I work in the garden daily. It is an extension of my home, a serene, yet wild place where I am most creative and 100% myself. Every morning I walk through my property, a mug of java in hand, giving thanks for the beauty, solitude, and bounty of my magical oasis. Getting my hands in the dirt soothes my

soul. I lose track of time as I weed, prune, trim, fertilize, water, and bite into a crunchy apple straight off the tree. I come up with the best ideas for my books, columns, radio shows and lectures. Before they float away with the wind, I race to write my thoughts down.

As a fire prevention strategy, I have been clearing the brush and understory plants from my creeks when the air permits. If you live near open space, hills or creeks, make sure to take time to remove dead trees, limbs and brush as we have at least another month of fire season. Leave a couple of small brush piles as habitat for owls. Owls dine on a smorgasbord of voles, mice, rats, and other rodents that wreak havoc in the garden. A family of owls can devour several thousand rodents during the nesting season with the young eating as many as four per night. Add a nesting box 15 feet off the ground to a branch of an older tree. When you invite owls into your landscape, you won't have to use harmful poisons, plus their hooting sound is calming.

Since sheltering in Mother Nature has been impossible these past two months, I find myself exhausted, jittery, tense, and concerned for the future of our country and our planet. For me, this means getting creative about the sensory experience that being outdoors provides and bringing those familiar feelings and scents indoors. If we can't be 'in' Mother Nature, let's shelter 'with' Mother Nature.

Here are some things you can do to relieve stress, feel energized, and rebalanced:

1. TAP into the sounds of nature on your favorite radio network. Listening to the trickling of a creek, the rushing of a river, or the pounding of ocean waves is relaxing. Or tune in to the cooing doves or the whistling cockatiels. Nature sounds quiet our beating hearts and quiets our blood pressure.
2. CREATE a bedtime spray that will alter your emotional and physiological mood. Gather fragrant roses petals and lavender in a glass jar. Pour boiling water over the petals, cover, and allow to sit in the sun for several hours to make a floral tea. Add a couple of drops of alcohol, strain the petals, and pour the clear liquid into a sprayer. Spray your pillow before going to bed. Lavender alleviates tension and the fragrance of roses stimulates your immune system. You'll slumber soundly. Experiment with other florals. Jasmine mitigates anxiety and bergamot increases positivity while reducing stress.
3. EAT fresh. Harvest fruits, herbs, and vegetables as needed. Instead of picking a bushel of tomatoes, only pick what you need immediately. Apples, figs, beets, radishes, arugula, eggplant, and peppers are ripe.
4. PICK a bouquet of fall blooming flowers such as Black-eyed Susan or echinacea to lessen anxiety. Add a small branch of pistache as it turns red. Just seeing fresh flowers and colorful leaves intensifies luxury and joy.
5. ADD a small, desktop fountain to your office. Watching the movement of the water and hearing the tinkling helps bring the outdoors in.
6. LOOK at photos of nature. Everywhere I go, I snap pictures of nature scenes that inspire me. When I'm feeling blue, I check out the green.
7. COLLECT reminders of the outdoors to showcase indoors. Turkeys are leaving their beautiful feathers in yards as they peck at the autumn seeds. Pinecones and acorns are dropping as squirrels stash treasures for winter. Make a fall arrangement to touch and admire.
8. PAINT a pumpkin with glitter and glamour. We'll have the second full moon of the month on Oct. 31. Bring on the sparkle!
9. PLACE a pot of mums on your patio, porch, or balcony to admire through a window.
10. BUY any book from my website at <https://www.CynthiaBrian.com/online-store> and besides the extra seeds and goodies you will receive, I will send you a free musical CD to help you relax and re-balance.

Despite what our current leader says, the coronavirus will not be going away anytime soon. We must continue to only listen to the scientists and heed the warnings of the medical establishment who have the training to understand these dire circumstances. The pandemic does not favor a political party. It recognizes no boundaries. We must be vigilant, diligent, savvy, and continue to wear masks, employ social distancing,

and shelter-in-place as much as possible. When the air is clear, spend time outside. Hike, bike, walk, stroll, run, swim and garden.

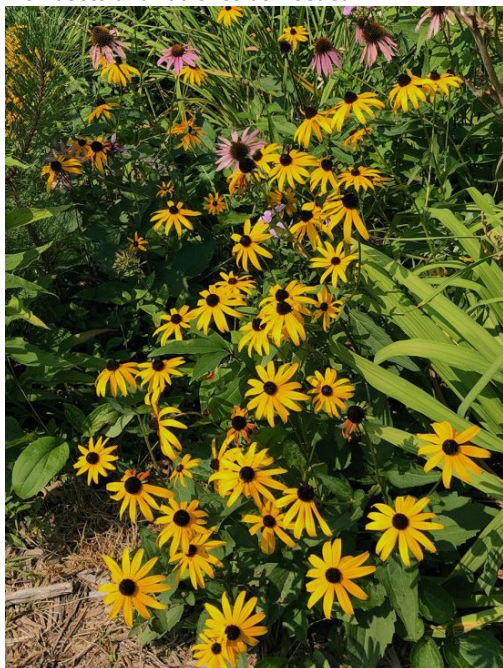
The leaves are starting to change into their glorious fall wardrobe. Autumn is a prime time for planting, but don't risk your health on red-alert or spare-the-air days. There is plenty of time to plant bulbs, trees, and reseed or install lawns as temperatures will be warm into November.

We live in a beautiful area and are indeed too blessed to be stressed. Vote for decency and respect as you shelter with Mother Nature. I wish you peace, tranquility, and good health as we weather these disasters together.

Savor a sunset. Happy growing.



Pick beets and radishes as needed.



Make a bouquet of fall flowers, including Black-eyed Susan and echinacea.



Bright red leaves of a pistache tree flanks succulents.



Take pictures of relaxing scenes. This is fall at my friend's home.



Paint a pumpkin with glitter and sparkles.



Clear brush and dead limbs to protect against fire danger, but leave habitat for owls.



Clear brush and dead limbs to protect against fire danger, but leave habitat for owls. Cynthia Brian, The Goddess Gardener, is available for hire to help you prepare for your spring garden. Raised in the vineyards of Napa County, Cynthia 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 c, celebrating 21 years of service to the community. www.BetheSTARYouAre.org. Tune into Cynthia's StarStyler Radio Broadcast at www.StarStyleRadio.com. Buy copies of her best-selling books and receive extra freebies including a FREE relaxation CD., Chicken Soup for the Gardener's Soul, Growing with the Goddess Gardener, and Be the Star You Are! series at www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store. Cynthia is available for virtual writing projects, garden consults, and inspirational lectures. Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com www.GoddessGardener.com

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