

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener Cynthia Brian

Nature's Halloween



An alley of pumpkins invites trick-or-treaters into the garden.

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The landscape boasted a big vegetable garden that enthralled the kids. “What do you want for dinner?” we’d ask. Each child would grab a basket to pick their favorite vegetables. The fun began with the children helping to prepare our evening meal. On Halloween, we’d start the day picking apples in the orchard. We’d take the apples to the barn where we’d press them into apple cider, saving some to make apple pies. We would also play a fun game, Bobbing for Apples, giving prizes to the winner. (Not a recommended activity during this pandemic!)

Next was the pumpkin carving. Each person was given a pumpkin to carve or decorate. We saved seeds for roasting and some for planting in the spring. Again, the kids would go to the vegetable garden to pick their favorite vegetables. We’d craft with our found nature treasures and decorate the “haunted house.” Everyone would get dressed in their home-made costumes, followed by our Halloween feast.

Of course, the best was yet to come. The kids, all decked out in their Halloween regalia, couldn’t wait.

Trick-or-treating!

All the lights would be extinguished except for lanterns and candles. Darkness dropped with the haunting sounds of the night and a bit of help from the hidden boombox. One parent corralled the kids on the porch as the rest of the costumed parents hid behind doors of the house with bags of candy. On “go,” the kids ran door to door knocking, shouting “trick-or-treat.” An adult would jump out with a trick and fill their Halloween bag. After all the treats were distributed, like all kids, the trading and negotiating for candy began.

And, after the youngsters were totally exhausted, (and probably on a



Bedeck your yard with a bale of hay and big, bright pumpkins.

Photos Cynthia Brian

sugar high), we adults would celebrate Halloween, too.

The fond memories of these sacred Halloween traditions can be easily translated to our current situation with COVID-19 to ensure a safe and memorable Halloween. This year Halloween is on a Saturday. Make a weekend of it!

If you have a pod of people that you are already socializing with because you are all social distancing, one family could host the Halloween party. Or, make the Halloween event virtual to include more people.

- Plan and prepare a meal together.
- Dress in costume.
- Buy a few bales of hay to create a maze. (The hay can be used in the garden afterward as top dressing.)
- Carve or paint pumpkins.
- Save seeds for roasting and spring planting.
- Bake bread with menacing faces.
- Make a candy shoot out of PVC to send candy from one person to another yard.
- How about a slingshot to catapult candy across the street to your friends?
- For those with gardens, employ the kids to pick vegetables and fruits that are festive and fun. For example, guavas are self-harvesting now, so if someone has a guava tree, try a new recipe.
- Add a tiny pumpkin to an autumn floral bouquet.
- Have a nature scavenger hunt followed by a mask making shindig with found elements: feathers, bark, twigs, flowers, acorns, pebbles, leaves, and more.
- Press apples to make a brew of witch cider.
- Visit a pumpkin patch with social distancing.
- Howl at the moon with the coyotes!
- Hoot with the owls.

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