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Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

By Cynthia Brian



The fall view from the balcony is always spectacular. Photo Cynthia Brian

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"Let the beauty we love be what we do." ~ Rumi

Sitting on my balcony, watching the ginger orb of the sun shoot sparkles and glitter throughout the dusky sky, I am besotted with the fireworks of fall foliage on the horizon. The colors and intensities change daily as I attempt to capture the essence of their beauty in my camera lens.

A red-branched Japanese maple is glimmering gold one day. Four days later it is pumpkin spice orange. My liquid amber tree leaves are progressing from buttery blonde to tangy tangerine to burning scarlet. Even the green vegetation on my lamium has turned magenta. My garden is a display of fall fireworks.

It's been a busy year. Since the onset of the pandemic, every day I have worked many hours to improve my landscape: pruning dead limbs, repairing stairs, rebuilding arches, eradicating weeds, planting

new specimens, fertilizing, firescaping, reseeding, and adding amendments. After reseeding my lawns, I covered the grass with enriched soil which will bolster root establishment. My back aches from the yards of amendments I've wheelbarrowed to the garden beds and there is still more to shovel.

To provide a respite from the labor, I added a bench on my hill overlooking my recently cleared oak tree meadow. The creek will flow during the winter but for now, it's relaxing to sit for a bit to watch the deer munching on the shoots sprouting after the recent rains and the squirrels scampering about collecting acorns. Peace and serenity increase my gratitude for living in such bucolic surroundings where I can breathe fresh air and listen to the sounds of silence. It's quiet, that is until the wild turkeys descend and start a raucous. Several Toms started fighting with the hens squawking a few feet away. Thanksgiving has arrived!

When I planted the three vines of wisteria, grape, and pink bower on my pergola, it was an experiment in competition. All three are aggressive growers, but I was certain that the victor would be the wisteria who would choke the other two. I'm glad that I'm not a betting woman, or I would have lost.

Much to my sheer delight, after 15 years of cohabitation, the three have become symbiotic siblings supporting one another's expansion. The three vines have intertwined and mingled in the magnolia, fruitless pear, and loquat tree creating a beautiful privacy screen that frames my backyard. Each boasts distinctive features. The wisteria and the grape are deciduous and will shed their colorful autumn leaves soon while the bower vine is evergreen with blooming pink flowers. In winter, the shiny bright green foliage of the bower vine covers the bare branches of the other two. In spring, the wisteria bursts into glorious purple blooms followed by the bud break of the grapevine. Throughout the summer months, their leaves cover the pergola with much-needed shade and in September, I harvest grapes. What a fruitful collaboration of nature.

Today as I was doing a final edit of this column, the sky clouded gray and the waterworks flowed. How thrilling to finally have rain! I put on my rain boots, hoodie, and slicker to fertilize the grass and I finished covering the patio furniture. Winter is a mere four weeks away, yet I still have a few more autumn tasks to accomplish including planting additional bulbs on the hillside. Daffodils from previous years have already sprouted and will begin blooming in December. With the ground moist, digging is easier.

After three hectic seasons of heavy garden exertion, I am looking forward to listening to the rain as I read a book in front of a blazing fireplace with a cup of hot chocolate. For now, I'll savor the fireworks of the glowing fall leaves from my balcony.

Happy gardening. Happy growing. Happy Thanksgiving.

Cynthia Brian's End of November Garden Guide

- PROTECT patio furniture by covering with machine-washable covers or clear plastic or put away for the winter in a storage shed.
- DIG bulbs now. Bulbs that do well in our area, including tulips, crocus and daffodils, are available in nurseries and garden centers.
- FERTILIZE lawns.
- PHOTOGRAPH the changing colors of the autumn trees and shrubs.
- RAKE leaves and add to your compost pile.
- TOP DRESS garden with mulch and amendments.
- PULL out dead annuals.
- DEADHEAD roses to continue the blooming season.
- ADD solar-powered, weather-resistant garden lights to illuminate paths for winter darkness.
- CLEAN gutters and make sure downspouts are unclogged.
- FIX vent screens, broken foundation, and roof shakes and remove brush and wood piles from the perimeter of your house to deter mice and rats from building their winter abode.
- REPAIR garden tools and equipment before storing.
- MOVE containers of frost-prone plants to a covered area near the house or wrap with burlap.

- THANK YOU for being such dedicated readers of Digging Deep. I wish you a very healthy and happy Thanksgiving.



A close-up of the Japanese maple tree looks like a painting. Photo Cynthia Brian



Reflection of the beautiful fall trees in a pond. Photo Cynthia Brian



The mustard yellow leaves on the Japanese Maple. Photo Cynthia Brian



Four days later, the yellow leaves have turned to burnt fireworks orange. Photo Cynthia Brian



Top dressing on lawn to enrich the soil and cover the seeds.



Tom turkeys fighting before Thanksgiving!



Three intertwined vines on the pergola include grape wisteria, and bower.



Cynthia Brian wishes you a Happy Gratitude Day.

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 c3. Tune into Cynthia's StarStyler Radio Broadcast at www.StarStyleRadio.com. Buy copies of her best-selling books, including, Chicken Soup for the Gardener's Soul, Growing with the Goddess Gardener, and Be the Star You Are! Millennials to Boomers at www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store. Hire Cynthia for writing projects, garden consults, and inspirational lectures. Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com www.GoddessGardener.com

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