

Lamorinda

OUR HOMES

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The Real Estate Year in Review

... read on Page D4

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Renewal by nature



Arugula is easy to grow from seed.

Photos Cynthia Brian

By Cynthia Brian

“Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever” – Mahatma Gandhi

I popped the crunchy pods of my just-picked sugar snap peas into my mouth as I uttered a prayer of gratitude for the food I grow to nourish my family and the gardens I cultivate to nourish my soul. The past few weeks have brought the fragility of life into focus amidst the mounting death toll from the pandemic and the anxiety aroused by the political rampages.

We need to return to our roots to savor the sweetness of life. For me, Mother Nature has always provided renewal and refreshment in her simplicity and order. When I'm feeling stressed, I go outside to walk, listen, see, smell, touch and taste ... to reconnect with my senses and revive my spirit.

I picked a few stems of jonquil which are now sitting in a vase on my desk as I write this column filling my nostrils with their elegant perfume. My step increases its bounce as I taste the tangy citrus of my newly ripe Navel oranges. Back in my vegetable garden, arugula, sorrel, Swiss Chard, assorted greens, and beets await my culinary menus. Orange and yellow calendula flowers season my salads and the unusual hued flowers of osteospermum el-

evate my chi as they decorate my hillside.

My journal indicates that this week in January the roses are to be pruned. My bushes are still filled with buds and blooms that enhance the landscape and my heart. I will complete this task when it is colder next month. Beauty is required as a tonic for joyfulness.

Winter is a time to regroup, to rest, to repair, to rethink. Deciduous trees are now bare, an indication that work in the garden is winding down, at least for a month or so.

We can use this period to dream and decide what projects and plantings we may want to engage in throughout the year. What's on your list of things that you've always desired in your backyard but never had the time, money, or inclination to accomplish? A sampling of suggestions to fill your vision boards could include:

- Planting a pollinator garden or a cutting garden;
- Making a meditation meadow;
- Rebuilding a patio or deck;
- Erecting a retaining wall;
- Growing vegetables, herbs, and fruits;
- Retrofitting regions for relaxation and reading;
- Adding a trellis, gate, arbor, or gazebo;
- Creating compost piles or buying compost bins;
- Improving a perennials plot;
- Hanging hammocks for summer enjoyment;
- Switching to succulents;
- Increasing native populations;
- Including a play structure;
- Paving a path with gravel or crushed granite;
- Installing a pond, fountain, waterfall, or other water feature;

... continued on Page D11



A unique color for Osteospermum blooming in January.