

Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 15 Issue 18 Wednesday, October 27, 2021



Lamorinda Home Sales

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Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian **Gremlins of the garden**



Photos Cynthia Brian

Decorate your front porch with pumpkins and chrysanthemums.

By Cynthia Brian

"Gnome and elf and fairy, Witch and ghost make merry On this last of dear October's days." ~ Lettie. C. Van Derveer, Halloween Happenings, 1921

The howling, nipping, and barking of the coyote send shivers down my back. Although they hunt throughout the day, as dusk settles over the hills and the moon rises, these wily carnivores set out to regulate the ecosystem. As apex crepuscular predators in an urban landscape, their prey is often our beloved pet. Creepy and blood-curdling!

For kids, the hot topic of conversation this week revolves around Halloween. As we decorate pumpkins and light jack-o'-lanterns, spooky specimens and wild phantoms are also prowling around our hallowed grounds.

We work hard to maintain our landscapes and it's frustrating to

have our sanctuaries invaded by unwanted organisms. One of the most noxious weeds to assault our gardens is the bindweed. Mimicking the fair face of a morning glory flower, like a poltergeist, it twists and tangles until it strangles plants and shrubs. Each plant produces more than 50 seeds that can survive for 50 years or more, making this deep-rooted gremlin a wicked weed to eradicate.

The cast list of freaky wild ones includes the misunderstood good, the beastly bad, and the pesky players that we often wish to hocus pocus somewhere else.

The Misunderstood Good

Owls

Owls are the silent, stealthy hunters of our gardens providing free rodent control. When you hear their haunting hoots, be grateful that they've designated your trees as their habitat. Install a tall owl nesting box if you don't have old trees attractive to owls.

Frogs and Toads

In folkloric traditions, magic potions are concocted in rituals using frogs and toads to cast evil spells. These helpful hoppers have been much maligned. As a natural pest controller, they will munch over 10,000 insects in a few months. Their summer song and mating calls are melodious, indicating that you have a healthy environment. Turn a broken clay pot on its side, bury it halfway in the soil, and welcome these amphibians to their toad abode.

Bats

Dracula and the coronavirus have something in common ... they both disparaged the docile bat. Bats are not winged rodents or bloodsuckers. Instead, they are the only flying mammals with wings. Bats are productive pest patrollers feeding on insects, progressive pollinators of hundreds of plant species, and sensational seed dispersers.



Plant garlic to keep vampires away.

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