

Lamorinda

OUR HOMES

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Lamorinda Home Sales

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Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Grateful gobbler



Photos Cynthia Brian

The muted colors of the forest are reminiscent of an Impressionist painting.

By Cynthia Brian

“Gratitude is the fairest blossom which springs from the soul.” ~ Henry Ward Beecher

Are you feeling grateful? Although I feel thankful for every day that I walk on this earth, after such a tumultuous 20 months, this year my heart is overflowing with appreciation. Throughout these times, my garden has been my sanctuary, my refuge, and the place where I recharge. The abelia is blooming and that makes me cheerful.

Autumn is a splendid season with cooler weather and nature’s spectacular showcase of colorful leaves on shrubs and trees. Maple, Japanese maple, tallow, crape myrtle, pistache, liquid amber, beech, black gum, sumac, aspen, dogwood, ginkgo biloba, tupelo, red oak, and many more species are just a few of the magical specimens whose leaves metamorphose from green into vibrant red, yellow, or-

ange, purple, crimson, brown, russet, tan, bronze and scarlet. During the growing season, the green in leaves is a product of the chlorophyll using sunlight to manufacture sugars to feed the tree. As the weather cools with shorter days and longer nights, biochemical changes occur allowing a painter’s palette of vibrant and muted hues. The most stunning displays happen after a succession of sunny, warm days followed by crisp and cool nights. Moisture in the soil is also a factor that can delay or speed up the color.

I have just returned from experiencing splendid fall colors on the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers. On some of the riverbanks, the tree colors were muted as if in an Impressionist masterpiece. In gardens and parks, singular specimens were neon bright as if painted by Frederick Church.

Before I left, my trees were only beginning to change colors. When I arrived home a few days later, the leaves had already fallen, carpeting lawn, patio, and driveway in a thick layer.

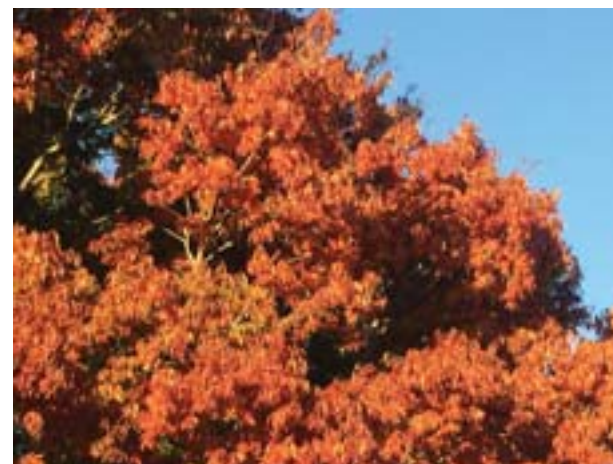
My husband was anxious to clean up the leaves and I had to beg him to *not* put the leaves in the green bin. Fallen leaves are great for the compost pile and as a natural fertilizer for other plants.

Here’s what you need to know about fallen leaves: Keep them in your garden!

We can reduce emissions from landfills by managing the leaves by leaving them around the root zones of plants, shrubs, and trees to suppress weeds, provide shelter for beneficial insects, maintain moisture, control temperature, and return nutrients to the soil which plants will reuse. Microorganisms help small leaves decompose quickly. Larger leaves may need to be mowed to break them up.

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The bright crimson of the beeches.