

Published December 8th, 2021

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

By Cynthia Brian



Still time to seed or reseed lawns. Photos
Cynthia Brian

"Fall, leaves, fall; die, flowers, away;
Lengthen night and shorten day!
Every leaf speaks bliss to me
Fluttering from the autumn tree."~ Emily Bronte
Without a doubt, autumn is a beautiful time of the year with cooler weather and spectacular, ever-changing foliage. What I can't get used to is the early setting sun and the dark skies at 5 p.m. as we enter December. My circadian rhythm is out of sync. My preference is to work in the garden as late as possible every day and in the summer that means until 9 or 9:30 p.m. In fall and winter, my style is crimped, leaving me with long to-do lists.

This past week the newspaper publishers and I received an email from the editor of a DIY garden authority from New Zealand who has enjoyed reading the Digging Deep columns. She sent a link to their fall garden information that I am posting here because it includes everything you need to know about planting

your fall garden and it is perfect for our location. How honored and thrilled we are to know that Digging Deep is being read in the Southern Hemisphere! Check out their guide to fall gardening.
<https://happydiyhome.com/fall-garden/>

Since the weather is warm and mild, it is still a great time to reseed your lawn, cover bald spots, or seed a new lawn. I reseeded mine a few weeks ago when the atmospheric river and bomb cyclone hit our area with force, and the grass is gloriously green and growing. I have always liked the award-winning seed, Pearl's Premium, available in California only online at www.PearlsPremium.com. The roots grow deeper than most seeds and the lawn doesn't need as much water or mowing.

I wrote to Jackson, the founder of the company whom I met when I was lecturing at the National Garden Communicators Conference, and asked if there was a discount that I could offer my readers. He kindly responded that he offers a 10% discount at checkout with the code BLACKFRIDAY. He was apologetic that he couldn't offer more of a discount at this time, however, due to the wildfires and the drought, two years of his work were decimated resulting in his costs escalating to over 300%. He has seed in stock right now, but, because of the unique seeds that go into his mix, once this season is sold out, we may not be able to get any more seed for a year or more. If kept in its packaging, the seed is good for at least 18 months. Order now. Again, www.PearlsPremium.com and put in the code BLACKFRIDAY.

Although we only have a few more weeks of fall, because of the current lovely climate, you can continue planting. My jonquils have been blooming for the past month and I continue to install more bulbs. Planting parsley either in beds or in containers is an excellent edible plant that will provide ongoing beauty as well as culinary interest. I've been harvesting my Brussel sprouts and am planting new seedlings for later harvest. If you are looking for specimens that are deer-resistant, consider Hosta, fern, coral bell, boxwood, weigela, and butterfly bush. Keep in mind that no plant is deer-proof. Succulents are available in many varieties and colors and are an excellent choice for our drought-ravaged land.

As we prepare for winter, we still have a few more tasks in the autumn garden to ensure beautiful spring vegetation. Since the rain, weeds have sprouted and need to be pulled as they are not only unsightly and spreading, but they will be detrimental by providing shelter for overwintering uninvited insects and contributing to disease. Pull them out while the soil is still soft and malleable. Once it hardens, the job is much tougher. Remove any dead or diseased plants as well. When substantial rain arrives, it will encourage fungus growth.

To add more nitrogen to your beds, plant a cover crop of vetch, rye, oats, or other legumes. In the spring, dig it into the soil. The Farmer's Almanac encourages protecting fruit trees from winter-hungry rodents by installing a guard of fine mesh hardware around the base of the trees.

Other last-minute chores before fall falls into winter include:

- FERTILIZE your trees while they are dormant. Underground the roots are active and can use the nutrient boost.
- TAKE cuttings of coleus, pelargoniums, and geraniums before you prune them back for the winter. Put the stems in a jar of water and when they root, you can transplant them to use indoors.
- DIVIDE your peonies, daylilies, and bearded iris if you didn't do it last month. Exchange with friends or find new needy places in your garden.
- CONTINUE reusing your gray water for outdoor container plants that won't benefit from any rainy weather. Every drop you save is crucial as we are not out of the drought woods.
- PROTECT roses from extreme temperature changes by covering plants with eight to ten inches of mulch above the crown.
- ADD non-breakable decorative ornaments to trees and shrubs as festive garden features.
- COVER frost-prone plants such as bougainvillea with burlap.
- CLEAN gazebos, decks, patios, porches, fountains, stairs, bricks, and other structures.

- RAKE debris from gravel paths.

Fall gardening is a wonderful way to reap the benefits of nature. Studies show that spending time outdoors decreases levels of the hormone cortisol, lowers blood pressure, and reduces other markers of stress. Relaxation is the reward. When you are working in the garden, you are exercising which is a critical pillar of optimum health. Going outside encourages you to get up and move. With your autumn gardening duties, your mood will be elevated, especially during this hectic holiday season amidst a pandemic. Spend time in green spaces to reduce your anxiety. The magnificence of nature lowers levels of inflammation in the body. Pollution is the culprit for many illnesses including respiratory problems, cancer, and heart disease. Breathe in the fresh air and experience the awe of autumn.

As we watch the final fluttering of autumn leaves, let your garden be a natural prescription to lower your stress and heighten the excitement of the forthcoming holiday season.

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Happy Gardening. Happy Growing.



Rake gravel paths and remove debris from garden spaces. Photos Cynthia Brian



Because of our water shortage, planting a succulent garden is a great choice. Photos Cynthia Brian



Maintain fountains and enjoy the trickling sound of water. Photos Cynthia Brian



Weigela is a deer-resistant perennial that can be planted in fall. Photos Cynthia Brian



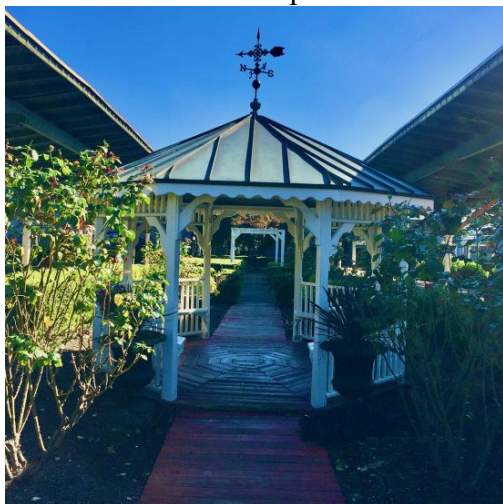
A friend's beautiful mature garden with redwoods and healthy shrubs.



Parsley is a perfect plant for containers.



fallen leaves cover the pavement.



Clean gazebos, decks, paths, and other outdoor structures before winter.



Cynthia Brian hangs non-breakable ornaments on her shrubs and trees

Cynthia Brian, The Goddess Gardener, is available for hire to help you prepare for your winter 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! 501 c3. Tune into Cynthia's StarStyler Radio Broadcast at www.StarStyleRadio.com. Buy copies of her books, including, Chicken Soup for the Gardener's Soul, Growing with the Goddess Gardener, and Be the Star You Are! www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store. Receive a FREE inspirational

music DVD and special savings. Hire Cynthia for writing projects, garden consults, and inspirational lectures. Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com www.GoddessGardener.com

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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