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Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

By Cynthia Brian



Marsh rosemary (Limonium), also called sea lavender makes an excellent dried flower. Photo Cynthia Brian

"Lose yourself in nature and find peace."~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

Between the pandemic, the Russian-Ukrainian war, and, for me, a frightening family medical emergency, 2022 has been tumultuous and tough. Everyone is feeling the pain regardless of any city, county, or country residence. Anxiety and stress mount daily as news of the world become ever desperate, depressing and diabolical.

Increased research indicates that nature-based activities are an excellent therapeutic intervention to ease our mental and physical stress. Whether it is a walk in the park, forest-bathing, hugging a tree, smelling the jasmine, or weeding your garden, taking a break with the beauty of the natural environment is an essential element in keeping us well. Listening to bird songs, the croaking of frogs, the lapping of waves, or the trickling of a fountain all have positive effects on our health. We'll lower our blood pressure and decrease levels of the stress hormone cortisol as we awaken our senses outdoors.

Standing in solidarity with the people of Ukraine, I continue to embrace the colors of blue and yellow. Perhaps because I'm looking for those colors, they seem to be everywhere, and I am shooting photos. This week I'm enjoying the tiny, starred cerulean of Blue-Eyed grass as well as the ubiquitous buttery blooms on freesia. Marsh rosemary (Limonium, sea lavender), nasturtiums, and sedum carpet hillsides and paths reminding me of the courage of the Ukrainians. I hiked a

trail around an Emeryville harbor to soak in the water views and inhale the fresh sea air, while marveling at the spectacular cobalt plumes of Pride of Madeira (echium fastuosum) and the sky blues of California lilac (ceanothus). My mood instantly improved.

Being in nature fosters resilience as well as encourages awe and wonder. Nature is restorative to body, mind, and spirit. Spring is here and the ground is bursting with new life. Trees unfurl luxuriant leaves, bulbs bloom in a kaleidoscope of colors, and fruit trees, including apple, pear, crabapple, and cherry are bursting with buds. This is the perfect season to plant peace.

I've planted three avocado trees that have been nurtured from a pit. A dwarf navel orange has been added to my citrus grove which is buzzing with bees sucking on the sweet nectar. Since I added new nutrient soil last season to my garden, there are numerous weeds. Pulling those weeds is time-consuming, yet it allows me to let my mind wander, relaxing enough to assist in solving challenges. Once my hillside is free of unwanted plants, I will begin to sow seeds of "pretties," flowering annuals that will bring me joy and tranquility.

If you are looking for seeds that will grow in our region, visit the Moraga Library where the Moraga Garden Club has installed a free seed library. The public is invited to take up to five packs of seeds and if you want to donate seeds to this marvelous outreach project, you are invited to do so.

It's not too late to plant roses and since peace is what everyone wants and deserves, consider planting the beautiful Peace Rose. It will brighten your garden and your heart.

As I lose myself in nature to find peace, I recall the words of President Dwight D. Eisenhower: "One day the people of the world will want peace so much that the governments will have to get out of their way and give it to them."

I think that time is now!

Peace be with you.

Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for April

EMPTY vessels of standing water as mosquitoes are already breeding. For fountains and birdbaths, clean the water regularly or add drops of bleach or mosquito dunks.

REMOVE deep-rooted weeds such as dandelions from your garden by hand.

DECREASE the spread of crabgrass by applying a pre-emergent that keeps seeds from germinating.

HARVEST the tender leaves of wild mustard, arugula, purslane, and dandelion. Add to salads and sandwiches for a surprising snap.

AERATE your lawn to improve the absorption of moisture and fertilizer before reseeding.

PICK UP dropped camellia blooms to deter petal blight.

REFRAIN from cutting back daffodils until they are as crisp as a cracker. They need to replenish the nutrients to the bulb for next year's floral explosion.

CUT small branches of crabapple or redbud to bloom in a vase on your nightstand. Research indicates that individuals with the brightest outlook and happiest attitudes keep blooms bedside.

FERTILIZE lawns and shrubs.
SCATTER snail bait to protect new shoots from the crawlers.
VISIT your local nursery to buy intriguing plants that will increase the attractiveness of your landscape and improve your temperament.
LOSE yourself in nature and find peace.
SUPPORT Ukraine.
Happy Gardening. Happy Growing. Happy Spring!



Buttery, yellow freesia are also fragrant. Photo Cynthia Brian



A walk around the Emeryville harbor yielded these spectacular cobalt spires of Pride of Madeira. Photo Cynthia Brian



A salute to the bravery of Ukraine with a hillside of sedum and cherry blossoms. Photo Cynthia Brian



The gorgeous blue clematis is an excellent climber on a trellis or arbor. Photo Cynthia Brian



Blue-Eyed Star Grass is a blue and yellow beacon of hope.



Clip a few small branches of Western Redbud for a floral display.



Nasturtiums are not only beautiful; they are delicious in salads.



Honoring Ukraine, Cynthia Brian continues to wear yellow and blue.

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 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.

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