

Published April 27th, 2022

## Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

By Cynthia Brian



Jasmine twines around a birdbath filled with succulents. Photo Cynthia Brian

"April hath put a spirit of youth in everything." ~ William Shakespeare

If experiencing rain in a dry season doesn't put a spring in our step, what will? After months of no precipitation, finally, in April we experienced a few showers. A critical ingredient of California's water supply, the Sierra snowpack is less than 40% from its peak. The drought will be with us this summer and fall but these mid-spring storms will deliver May flowers.

Jasmine is the delightful scent permeating the air, especially after a rain shower. The intoxicating perfume is rejuvenating. I grow jasmine throughout my landscape, various vines twining up trees. Multiple colors of bearded iris tender their brilliance in the middle of my hillside, where, after the rainfall, new weeds sprout. Proliferating is Herb Robert geranium, a fragrant weed that is pretty when small yet suffocating to other plants when full-grown. The positive aspect of this weed is that it is very easy to pull out by the roots when the soil is

moist. Weeds shooting up on my gravel paths demand attention.

Bulbs and rhizomes are the ultimate celebrities of my garden. Once planted, I forget about them until they burst into bloom, a welcome surprise especially when other plants are failing. If you are a beginner gardener, I highly recommend indulging in bulbs for all seasons. Most require little maintenance or effort with minimal water while providing maximum results. Some of my perennial favorites that are available in hues of white, pink, purple, yellow, and mixed colors include calla lily, gladiolus, oriental lily, bearded iris, Asiatic lily, dahlia, anemone, and naked lady.

The April showers also brought a swath of wild onions or more accurately, *A. triquetrum* three-cornered leek. The invasive, yet edible wild field garlic and three-cornered leek boast delicate white bell-shaped flowers with a distinct onion aroma. If they are growing in your landscape, enjoy them as in culinary dishes as you would chives or green onions, albeit with a stronger flavor. If you are not a fan of garlic or onions and you have these growing in your garden, it can be almost impossible to eradicate an abundant population. Also, be aware that there are other toxic species of flowers that resemble the tree-cornered leek including death camas or death lily. All parts of that plant are poisonous. The best safety method in differentiation is to only eat a plant that looks and smells like garlic or onion.

Another edible weed that I cultivate is mustard. Young mustard greens are delicious sauteed with onions, garlic, and olive oil or added to soups, salads, sandwiches and stews. The flavor is snappy and hot.

Roses are already in glorious bloom. Rose petals can be added to baths as well as salads if they have not been treated with chemicals. With Mother's Day around the corner, perhaps you'd like to present your mom with a gift of roses?

These young sprouts encourage us to embrace the spirit of youth as we march into May. A heartfelt shout out to every mom! You are our nurturers, teachers, and consolers. Happy Mother's Day!

COMPLY with Moraga-Orinda Fire District mandates by creating a defensible space around your home. Requirements include:

- Trimming trees to maintain a six-foot vertical clearance from the roof line.

- Removing hazardous vegetation.

- Clearing debris from gutters and roofs.

- Maintaining a two-foot non-combustible space around structures.

- Removing fire laddering fuels by trimming trees to eight feet above the ground.

- Cutting grass to three inches or less in height.

- Removing dead or dying trees and shrubs.

- The compliance deadline is June 1.

SPRAY your barbecue grill with white vinegar then scrub with half an onion to clean the grates and get ready for outside dining.

BUFF your garden tools by plunging them in a five-gallon bucket of sand mixed with a cup of vegetable oil. The sand will keep them sharper and the oil wards off rust. Small hand tools can be stored in the sand bucket.

PLANT frost tender plants as the weather warms toward the end of the month. Ground covers, citrus, bougainvillea, and summer annuals are available for purchase.

- SOW seeds of scarlet runner bean, sweet peas, or morning glories to climb on fences and wire.

CUT back the dying leaves of narcissi and daffodils if the fronds are dry and crunchy. If still green, wait another month.

SNIP a few tendrils of blooming jasmine. Add them to a vase for an enchanting fragrance that will permeate your house.

- BAIT the snails and slugs, pick them off by hand, use copper barriers, or bowls of beer. These slimy

crawlers will devour new seedlings.

BUY ladybugs from your nursery or garden center only if you see aphids or other pests on your plants. Remember ladybugs fly to infested gardens.

WEED, weed, weed. Because of the spring rains, weeds are ubiquitous, yet easy to pull. If they don't have seed heads, add pulled weeds to your compost pile.

FERTILIZE lawns, trees, shrubs, and ground cover plants.

TREAT roses organically to repel aphids and fungal diseases.

SPRAY evergreen pear trees and crape Myrtle trees to treat for and prevent fungal diseases including mildew and leaf spot.

BUY a red rose to show your love for your mother or anyone's mom on Mother's Day.

Happy Gardening and Happy Growing!



Weeds must be pulled from the gravel path. Photo Cynthia Brian



Blossoms on the Asian pear. Photo Cynthia Brian



Roses climbing an arbor. Photo Cynthia Brian



The bright pink blooms of a flowering cheery illuminate the landscape. Photo Cynthia Brian



Cynthia Brian is elated about the rain!

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](http://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](http://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](mailto:Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com) [www.GoddessGardener.com](http://www.GoddessGardener.com)

Reach the reporter at: [info@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:info@lamorindaweekly.com)

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA