

## Goddess Gardener Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for May

**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.



Blossoms on the Asian pear.