

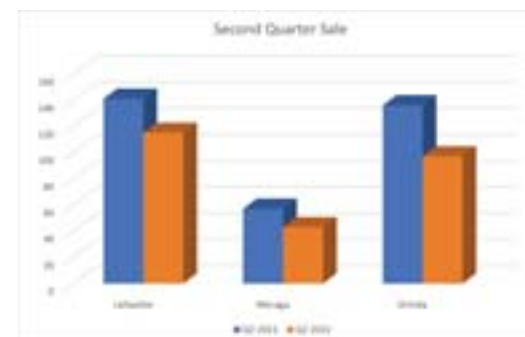
Lamorinda OUR HOMES

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The Real Estate Year in Review

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Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Animal plants



Lamb's ear is soft and fuzzy just like a baby lamb.



Foxgloves are digitalis and toxic to humans and pets.



The fuzzy seed head of goat's beard derives from the Greek word "Tragopogon".



Acanthus is known as Bear's Breech.

Photos Cynthia Brian

By Cynthia Brian

"We can judge the heart of a man by his treatment of animals." ~ Immanuel Kant

Our family has enjoyed an affinity for the animal kingdom for as long as I can remember. We loved creatures so much that we often named a pet for an animal of another species that they resembled. We've had dogs named Bear and Wolf, cats named Panther and Tiger, and even a horse named Spider, although he didn't look like an arachnid.

In the plant world, botanists and taxonomists who name plants also look to the realm of animals using zoographical Latin or Greek-based names for various genera and

species. Sometimes a part of the plant will remind them of an animal, or sometimes it is the marketing department of a plant breeder that comes up with the fun, and often humorous name for a new cultivar.

I walked through my garden giggling at the numerous "animals" that are growing. Trees, flowers, wildflowers, and even weeds bear the names of creatures. If you are looking for an amusing gardening endeavor to do with children this fall, ask them if they would like to plant an animal garden. Discuss their favorite critters, then research specimens to fit the bill.

Edit your list grouping plants that will demand the same soil, watering, and

sun/shade conditions together in one plot or pot. Mix annuals and perennials for an ongoing animal parade that will last throughout the year. Engage in a creative craft project making nametags for each plant. (Popsicle sticks are traditional favorites) Because the weather is too hot and dry to plant in summer, it's advised to wait for the cooler days of autumn to start digging a new garden. However, if you want to plant a few species in containers now, let the animal party begin. Make sure to follow directions on the plant tags and water frequently as containers lose moisture quickly.

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