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Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

By Cynthia Brian



Cynthia's Fire Chief nephew's illuminated house.
Photo Cynthia Brian

"The best Christmas trees come very close to exceeding nature." ~Andy Rooney

Everyone who knows me understands that I am a nature girl. I spend as much time outdoors as possible in all weather conditions. As I meander around my property, I am always investigating the trees, pondering the possibilities for Christmas décor. When December rolls around, there is nothing that gives me more joy than admiring the twinkling lights that illuminate landscapes, glow on houses, and glimmer on Christmas trees.

My family tradition has always been to decorate every inch of the inside and outside with holiday fervor. Growing up, my dad used to joke that for extra excitement, we could watch the electric meter spinning wildly. Our ranch house and surrounding gardens were adorned with thousands of lights, Nativity scenes, sleighs, Santa, elves, reindeer, snowmen, candles, and whatever else was over-the-top festive. Because we

lived on a farm in the boondocks, as kids we believed we had to light the night so that Santa would be able to find our house in the deep darkness.

Because my children have flown the coop and have their own homes, I'm not as crazy as earlier in my life with my holiday embellishments, although my extended family still goes all out. My brother's and nephew's houses could win awards for creativity and innovative illumination.

Trimming a Christmas tree is an active sport. Whether we cut a tree, buy a living tree, erect a fake tree, or bedeck a houseplant, festooning our holiday bushes is as varied as our personalities. It doesn't matter if a tree is perfect or off-kilter. What matters is the meaning of the moment and the joy it delivers during the season. Every year I adorn my aging fiddleleaf fig tree at the base of my stairwell with lights and ornaments as it has grown too large to move. In another room, the Christmas cheer is enhanced with a glistening, garlanded tree as well as freshly cut greenery with flowers from my yard. What makes all trees sparkle and shine are the twinkling lights, clear or colored.

Fresh greenery indoors creates the feeling of Christmas, especially with aromatic boughs of fir, pine, redwood, spruce and cedar. If you have any conifers in your yard, this is a great time to trim the limbs to use to decorate your porch and patio. Holly is a traditional plant to use in garlands, wreaths, and centerpieces, however, any berry-bearing bush adds color and whimsy to arrangements. All evergreens are welcome to create long-lived wreaths and centerpieces including clippings from boxwood, bay, magnolia, and pepper trees.

In "The Art of Living," Wilfred Peterson wrote that "Christmas is not in tinsel, lights, and outward show. The secret lies in an inner glow." My feeling about the tinsel, lights, ornaments, and outward show is that these accoutrements provide the inner glow of joy to my world.

Delight in my photos of these beloved, bejeweled Christmas trees and bright night lights. Whatever you celebrate, I wish you seasonal sparkle, and happy health. Glow forth to savor being home for the holidays.

Cynthia Brian's December Garden Guide

DECK the halls with boughs of holly, pyracantha, cotoneaster, magnolia cones, rose hips, or any other merry berry!

FEED the soil, not the plants. Continue adding organic materials including hay, leaves, and compost to enrich your soil over winter.

SAVE birds by going organic. Provide seeds, berries, and safe nesting areas. Add a few native plants to your landscape that native birds already enjoy or stop pruning roses to allow the rosehips to form and feed our flying friends.

TRIM low-hanging branches of redwoods, pines, firs, and other evergreens to use in wreaths, garlands, and holiday ornamentation.

CREATE a stunning DIY holiday table arrangement using a combination of evergreen branches, narcissi, pinecones, or other greenery from your garden.

PICK carrots to leave for Rudolph and bake a different kind of fruitcake with organic fruits from your garden. Apples and persimmons are fresh now, and you may have frozen or canned peaches, apricots, cherries, figs, or pears.

REST in winter. The holidays are a time to celebrate with family and friends. No more hoe, hoe, hoe. Take a break from garden chores. You deserve it.

IGNITE the night with your glimmering lights.

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing. Happy Hannukah. Merry Christmas!



Cynthia's farmer brother lit up his ranch home. Photo Cynthia Brian



Santa Day at SA boasted a pretty artificial tree. Ellegant tree. Angels and stars glow on this tiny tree. A freshly cut fir tree adorns the corner. Glorious green is the color of Christmas.



Nutcrackers stand guard. The aging and tall fiddleleaf fig is lit and trimmed for the holidays. A 12-foot garlanded tree is the focal point of the great room.

Photos Cynthia Brian



Christmas for Cynthia Brian with her daughter, daughter-in-law, and mom. Raised in the vineyards of Napa County, Cynthia Brian 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. Her newest children's picture book, No Barnyard Bullies, from the series, Stella Bella's Barnyard Adventures is available now at www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store For an invitation to hang out with Cynthia for fun virtual events, activities, conversations, and exclusive experiences, buy StarStyler NFTs at <https://StarStyleCommunity.com> Hire Cynthia for writing projects, garden consults, and inspirational lectures. Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com <https://www.GoddessGardener.com>

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