

Published January 18th, 2023

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

By Cynthia Brian



Camellias are blooming. Photos Cynthia Brian

"Hope and faith flower from the cheerful seeds of the old year to the sprouting garden of the new year's dawn." ~ Terri Guillemets

For the past three-plus weeks, we have endured intense storms (bombogenesis) with strong winds and extreme precipitation. Substantial atmospheric rivers caused flooding, mudslides, debris flows, and power outages. Rock-filled dry creeks are raging, trees have been uprooted, and many residences required sandbags as protection from the heavy showers.

I am grateful for the rain and only wish I had personal reservoirs and underground cisterns to capture the run-off as my barrels and buckets are overflowing. Despite the torrents, the drought is not over. We need more rain.

Weeds and seeds are sprouting everywhere. On my hillside, orange and yellow self-seeded calendula plants are blooming while poppy plants are peaking through the soggy soil. I have begun weeding daily, even in the downpours, as the small seedlings are so much easier to pull. Bruce Macler, a regular reader of Digging Deep and an Ambassador for MOFD's Fire Adapted Community program wrote me to encourage gardeners to start pulling out non-native, invasive, flammable, and difficult-to-control Brooms including *Cystisus*, *Gentista*, and *Spartum* while the soil is soft. For those big broom plants that are difficult to eradicate, MOFD has a special tool available to lend to the public which will pull out these

unwanted invaders, including the taproot. Contact MOFD to borrow this useful device. Thank you, Bruce, for the nudge to work on making our gardens fire safe while it is still winter.

In my last column, I discussed popular trends predicted for 2023 by the Garden Media Group with suggestions as varied as vertical gardening to the age of 100 being the new 50! (www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue1623/Digging-Deep-with-Goddess-Gardener-Cynthia-Brian-2023-Garden-Trends-Part-1.html)

Gardening at age 100 will require raised beds to avoid having to bend over as well as provide a manageable height for wheelchairs. This year, classic columns, statues, boxwood hedges, and iconic Greek gardens offer inspiration, especially with Gen Z. Stone walls, archways, and olive trees are in demand. For a timeless arrangement, roses, agapanthus, cyclamen, and water-wise succulents are included in designs as key plants. A staple of Greek design is gravel gardens, excellent choices for large and small spaces, requiring minimal maintenance in drought times.

Arbors have graced gardens throughout history. They provide shade and add a focal point to any landscape design. Although Greek decor will be progressively popular, when considering an arbor, select one that will complement the style of your home and garden. Choose durable materials that will withstand the weight of vines.

Climate action is also addressed in the trend report. The first hardiness zone map was drawn in 1960 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The country is half a zone warmer since the last map was updated in 2012 indicating that the climate velocity of heat will increase 13 miles per decade. Our earth's climate is projected to warm by an additional 11 degrees Fahrenheit by the end of this century. Planting climate-resilient trees will be one way to combat this warming planet. Reforestation produces clouds that cool the climate. Trees sequester and store carbon, conserve energy through their shade, decrease stormwater runoff, filter air pollutants, and reduce urban heat. It is critical to plant the correct trees in the correct places to increase biodiversity and resilient ecosystems. Hiring a gardening coach or arborist for specific zip codes will become increasingly important.

Orange is the designated color of the year. Orange has spiritual connotations deeply rooted throughout history. In Buddhism, it is the color of perfection and illumination. In Confucianism, it is the color of transformation. In Hinduism, Krishna's dresses are orange. In Western culture, orange is considered earthy, amusing, exciting, and warm. It is also the preferred pigment for prison apparel. Showcasing plants with orange or terra cotta hues will be the rage in garden centers this year.

Although we don't need to implement suggested trends, it's always beneficial to understand what is happening in the world. With a new year ahead of us, we can plan how we want to spend the next 11 months and how we want our landscapes to look and operate. Attract wildlife, especially birds, to your property by enticing them with native plants, trees, shrubs, and flowers. These will provide a consistent source of food throughout the year. Hang feeders, nesting boxes, fountains, and birdbaths to welcome these avian guests who will pollinate and protect your yard.

What's happening on my property right now? Listening to the cascading waterfalls, thunderous creeks,

and croaking frogs brings joy to my heart. Watching the birds find shelter throughout my landscape indicates these feathered friends call my garden home. Newts and salamanders are frequenting my pond. My camellia tree is full of buds and blooming. Pink Bergenia brightens the understory of shrubs. The 37-year-old olive tree boasts big black olives, although I am not planning on harvesting them. The hillsides are carpeted with sprouts of wildflower seeds scattered in the fall. Sage and Madeira are dazzling companions. The grass is emerald with new growth. Deciduous trees fascinate with branches of architectural interest. Lemons, limes, and tangerines knocked out of trees by the rains are gathered daily to use in the kitchen. The ground is saturated and unable to drain quickly. Retaining walls, gravel walks, and sandbags are protecting my home from the deluge. Thousands of narcissi blossoms scent the air. The heavy pruning of rose bushes will commence soon.

Indeed, with the stunning storms, hope and faith flower from the cheerful seeds of the old year to the sprouting garden of this new year's dawn.

I am grateful. Stay safe and weather the storms.

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing. Happy January!



The color of the year, orange calendulas offer sunshine in the rain. Photos Cynthia Brian



Madiera and sage are happy bedmates. Photos Cynthia Brian



The citron lemon (*Citrus medica*) is the original citrus fruit from which all lemons have been cultivated.
Photos Cynthia Brian



The architectural elegance of a bare Pistache tree in winter. Photos Cynthia Brian



A waterfall on Cynthia's property



Raised beds will help us garden until 100 years of age!



Plump purple-black olives on the tree



Greek fountains and ornamentation are popular this year.



Cynthia Brian wishes you a healthy, happy, prosperous, and golden New Year! 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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[back](#)

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