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Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

By Cynthia Brian



Tulip magnolias and palms are an uncommon, yet gorgeous combination. Photos Cynthia Brian

"Rain, rain go away. Come again another day!" ~
Nursery Rhyme

Do you remember being a child tired of the winter mud puddles and anxious to go outside to play? As much as California has needed the downpours, I find myself reminiscing about the dreariest, grayest, coldest winter of my childhood when my sisters and I decided to run away from the farm to find the sunshine.

We were all under the age of 5 and on the first rainless day in March we loaded our big red wagon with the most essential items . our dolls, dinosaurs, pogo sticks, jump ropes, picture books, puzzles, miniature tool kit, hula hoops, Monopoly money (we thought it was real), rock collections, roller skates, and a shovel. Items like food, water, clothing, and blankets never crossed our minds. Our mom handed us a bag of sandwiches, and Dad suggested we take our dog for protection. We kissed our parents goodbye and told them we were off to wonderland.

My garden is my wonderland, and I am antsy to start sowing. But, alas, the soil is still too damp and cold, so I have retreated to reading about resources for spring planning and planting. This is my way of marching into spring with increased knowledge while providing you with helpful information.

A book I highly recommend is by Susan Mulvihill, "The Vegetable Garden Problem Solver Handbook," which is chock full of easy-to-understand data on how to identify and manage diseases and other common problems on edible plants with natural solutions. I interviewed her on my radio broadcast, StarStyler-Be the Star You Are!r where you can listen to her advice (<https://www.voiceamerica.com/episode/142669/the-vegetable-garden-problem-solver-and-garden-guidance>).

Filled with hundreds of full-color photographs, many from her garden, and an extensive reference chart of problems with solutions, this book is an essential guide to pinpointing challenges and finding the answers quickly. A section on critters in the garden offers controls and strategies to outsmart the birds and mammals most often encountered.

As a garden communicator, I subscribe to a plethora of different catalogs, newsletters, and digital diaries, each one delivering a different perspective on how to design, create, and implement a cheerful landscape in any season. Reading garden catalogs brings me great pleasure. Most include a parade of pictures of plants in their prime. When perusing these collections, I feel like a kid in a candy store. My mouth is agape, and I can't get enough.

You'll find information on water-wise gardening, pollinators, ground covers, perennials, trees, patio plants, indoor décor, hanging baskets, arrangements, bouquets, seeds, bulbs, roses, azaleas, hydrangeas, shade gardens, herbs, vegetables, fruits, bird houses, ponds, garden accents, pottery, recipes, and more, depending on the publication. Make lists of your favorite specimens and products. Purchase locally at your favorite nursery or garden center, or order directly from the grower. Free shipping is often offered with purchases that total a certain amount of dollars.

Here are a few of my favorite catalogs and newsletters to whet your appetite:

American Meadows: www.AmericanMeadows.com

Baker Creek Heirloom seeds: www.RareSeeds.com

Bluestone Perennials: www.BlueStonePerennials.com

Botanical Interests: www.Botanicalinterests.com

Burpee Seeds and Plants: www.Burpee.com

Brent and Becky's Bulb Growers: www.BrentandBeckysBulbs.com

Green Mantel Heirloom Plant Nursery: www.GreenMantelNursery.com

Gurneys Seed and Nursery: www.Gurneys.com

High Country Gardens: www.HighCountryGardens.com

Jackson and Perkins: www.jacksonandperkins.com

John Scheepers Kitchen Garden Seeds: www.kitchengardenseeds.com

Lilipons Water Garden: <https://lilypons.com>

Monrovia Nursery Company: www.Monrovia.com

Nature Hills Online Plant Nursery: www.NatureHills.com

Nichols Garden Nursery: <https://nicholsgardennursery.com>

Plant Delights Nursery, Inc.: www.PlantsDelights.com

Proven Winners: www.ProvenWinners.com

Raintree Nursery: <https://raintree nursery.com>

Renee's Garden: www.ReneesGarden.com

Seed Savers Exchange: www.seedsavers.org

Territorial Seed company: <https://territorialseed.com>

Urban Farmer Seeds: <https://www.ufseeds.com>

Wayside Gardens: www.WaysideGardens.com

White Flower Farm: www.WhiteFlowerFarm.com

This directory is by no means exhaustive. Choose a few that speak to you and increase your horticultural education. To elevate your garden savvy even more, dive into the world of gardening for a free live stream of the Great Grow Along Festival happening March 15-19. Whether you're a seasoned green thumb or a new plant parent, you'll have the chance to connect with top influencers, participate in interactive demonstrations and in-garden footage, and even chat live with the speakers. Take advantage of this opportunity to take your gardening skills to the next level. There are several sessions to choose from, covering everything from sustainability to DIY landscaping, first-time and experienced gardeners will get practical advice and creative inspiration from top 'plantfluencers,' garden experts, and industry leaders - all for free. <https://greatgrowalong.com>

Being a gardener means being on a constant learning curve. No matter how much we know, we'll never know enough. We may not be able to work in our gardens in the unpredictable inclement weather, but with the inventory of reading materials and online displays, we won't need to run away to find the sunshine. Sit by the fire with a cup of herbal tea infused with lemon and mint to savor the sweetness of marching into spring. Or, since St. Patrick's Day is nigh, hoist a Guinness and relish the green terrain that evokes the Emerald Isles, land of leprechauns, shamrocks, and banshees, with gratitude to the rain. There will be plenty of time for digging deeply in the next few months.

You are probably wondering how my youthful runaway quest ended.

My sisters and I did find paradise. We spent the day in a field of mustard plants that were taller than us. We created rooms, pretended we were pioneers, picked flowers, and as night descended, were spooked by coyotes as we huddled together stargazing with our dog keeping guard. We were sleeping soundly when our Dad came to get his girls. In the morning we awoke in our beds, the smell of Mom's cooking wafting from the kitchen. At breakfast, we all agreed we had indeed found the Promised Land far, far away. Our parents listened with rapt attention as we shared stories of our exhilarating adventure to the land of sunshine and flowers. We didn't realize that our enchanted faraway world was only a mile down the road, on our own property. We had never left our farm.

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing. Happy St. Patrick's Day!



Hang a basket of violas for instant color and a pop of excitement. Photos Cynthia Brian



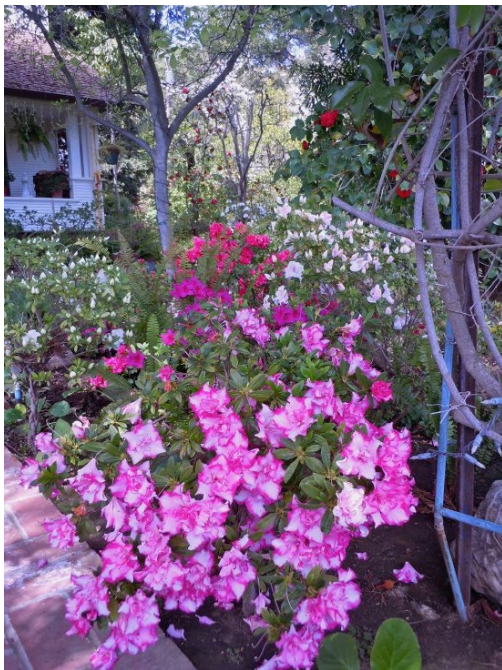
The sun shines on a winter view of a Japanese maple with daffodils at the base. Photos Cynthia Brian



Purple bearded iris glisten in the garden. Photos Cynthia Brian



A gorgeous combination of flowering pear and camellia trees. Photos Cynthia Brian



Azaleas are in full bloom.



Bright pink Bergenia provides a colorful understory to manicured privet along a fence.



Cynthia Brian enjoys playing in the mustard fields!

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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