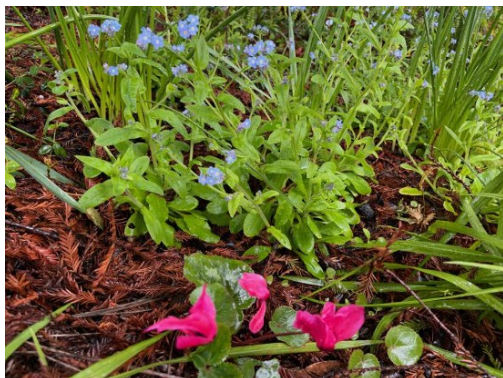


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Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

By Cynthia Brian



Forget-me-nots self-seeded amidst the fluorescent pink cyclamen in the foreground. Photo Cynthia Brian

"On the first warm day of Spring, I dig my fingers deep into the soft earth. I can feel its energy, and my spirit's soar." ~ Helen Hayes

Do you feel the energy? Did you wake up one morning to witness most of the leaves on your deciduous trees unfurled? After our long, cold, rainy winter, the warmer weather you experience is a salve for your soul. Does your spirit soar when you say: "Today is the day I will be digging in my garden?"

As cliché as it is, spring is the season of rebirth, renewal, and regeneration. Nowhere is this more evident than in the growth we experience in our gardens. The days will continue to get longer until the summer equinox, the air is refreshing, flowers and trees are in constant bloom, and we have a spring in our step. We feel younger and more alive. William Shakespeare in his wisdom wrote, "April hath put a spirit of youth in everything." William, you are so correct!

Spring is a magical time of year when we can finally get back into our gardens, plunge our fingers into the soil, and instead of planning, we begin planting! How therapeutic it is to scatter seeds, inhale the fresh air scented by the flowers, and be immersed in nature. As we stroll through our landscapes, we see what needs to be done and we also learn new things. Plants that have self-seeded are magically popping up in unexpected places. The sky-blue forget-me-nots remind me to remember and record what has happened and what will be happening in each plot.

Observe and interact with your plants. The emotional and mental benefits you will receive by immersing yourself in the wonders of nature will reduce stress, anxiety, depression, and improve your overall mental health. As you wander in your yard, plaster your face with a big smile. Lose track of time as you engage with the nurturing of seedlings in this new reborn growing season.

Feel the satisfaction of watching your tulip bulbs grow into gorgeous, cupped flowers, the pride in picking a bouquet of peonies to display, and the joy in knowing that by summer, you will be harvesting nutritious vegetables cultivated by you. If there are children or grandchildren in your vicinity, provide them with seeds to sow their favorite vegetables or fruits. They will be amazed at the course of nature, and how something so tiny as a seed can mature into something edible and delectable.

Watch birds building nests. Listen to the frogs croaking their mating calls as they emerge from slumber. Feel the velvety softness of lamb's ear and stick your nose into a fragrant hyacinth blossom. Spirits will be lifted in countless ways and you will be rejuvenated and revitalized.

Is there any better way to welcome spring than by getting your hands dirty and reconnecting with Mother Earth?

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing. Happy Springtime!
The Goddess Gardner's Gardening Guide for April

AMEND your soil before you begin sowing. Soil is the foundation of your garden. Rich compost will help with adding the nutrients your plants will need to thrive.

CLEAN and sharpen 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 the rust. Small hand tools can be stored in the sand bucket.

BUILD or buy raised beds lined with wire to make gardening easier on your back as well as protected from digging predators like gophers and rats. Fill with a combination of mulch, compost, and soil.

CONSIDER implementing permeable pavers on a patio for increased water capturing that will support your landscape.

PLANT frost tender plants as the weather warms toward the end of the month. Ground covers, citrus, bougainvillea, and summer annuals including begonia, lobelia, snapdragon, cosmos, and primrose are available for purchase.

SUPPORT peonies or other tall plants that are flopping with a tomato cage!

EXCHANGE rhizomes, bulbs, and seeds with fellow gardeners for a variety of selections.

SOW seeds of scarlet runner bean, sweet peas, star jasmine, or morning glories to climb on fences and wire.

CREATE a palette of striking performance with the many shapes, sizes, textures, and colors of drought-tolerant succulents which require minimal moisture.

ENJOY a successive parade of patterns and painted brushstrokes throughout the seasons by planting plants with complimentary hues and consecutive blooming times.

SCRUB your barbecue grill with white vinegar then scrub with half an onion to clean the grates and get ready for outside dining.

COMBINE ornamental and edible plants to create a cottage garden. Make sure your interior design and

exterior esthetics flow like water.

RESIST cutting back the dying leaves of narcissi and daffodils. The fronds are gathering their nutrition for next year's blooms. Cut them back only when as dry as potato chips.

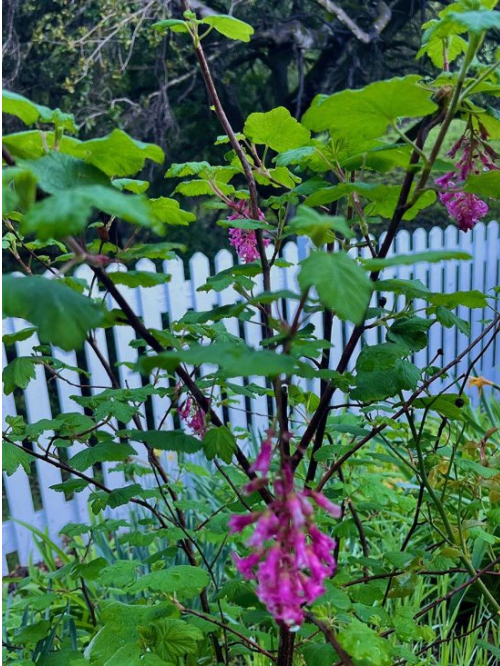
CONTROL snails and slugs with non-toxic Sluggo, pick them off by hand, use copper barriers, or bowls of beer. These slimy gastropods hatching now will devour new seedlings.

BUY ladybugs from your nursery or garden center if you see aphids, mealybugs, or other pests on your plants. Remember ladybugs fly to infested gardens.

VISIT the Be the Star You Are!r booth at the Moraga Faire on Saturday, April 29 between 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. to pick up a bag of complimentary spring potpourri and have your kids plant seeds in our craft area. Bring your gardening questions and I'll be there to answer them. www.BetheStarYouAre.org/events



The happy faces of orange and cream daffodils. Photo Cynthia Brian



Pink cluster blooms hang on black currant. Photo Cynthia Brian



Shades of cobalt blue displayed on hyacinth and periwinkle. Photo Cynthia Brian



Succulents shine in this container display. Photo Cynthia Brian



Unique green-maroon hellebore, a harbinger of the spring garden.



The spirit of spring is exhibited in tulips.



Peonies add a power punch and make beautiful bouquets.



Because of the rainy weather, moss grows on the brick stairs.



After the storms, Cynthia Brian enjoys the green hillsides. 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 <https://www.CynthiaBrian.com/online-store>. Hire Cynthia for writing projects, garden consults, and inspirational lectures. Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com <http://www.GoddessGardener.com>

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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