

Lamorinda OUR HOMES

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Lamorinda Home Sales

... read on Page D2

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian Fields of Dreams

Photos Cynthia Brian



A field of gold and orange nasturtiums with irises.

Photos Cynthia Brian



This field in the apple orchard is planted with seafoam statice, nigella, calendula, and climbing roses.

By Cynthia Brian

“When the primal forces of nature tell you to do something, the prudent thing is not to quibble over details.” ~ From the movie, “Field of Dreams”

Is there anyone who doesn't marvel over the sight of a fabulous field of flowers? As a plantaholic, I swoon each spring when the promise of a kaleidoscope of flora burst from the ground. Alas, this year my swooning turned into sweating.

With the 12 atmospheric rivers and continued rain through May, the ground is also bursting with unwanted weeds of every sort – bindweed, choke weed, thistle, dayflowers, vetch, black medic, wild cutleaf geranium, dock, fleabane, spurge, ragweed, cudweed, euphorbia, poisonous hemlock, unidentifiable thugs,

and a plethora of grasses blown in from the hills.

Yes, I know. A weed is just a plant growing where it is not wanted. Yet many of these unwelcome invaders are pernicious, poisonous, prickly, and painful. For the past two months, I have spent every free moment living the advice from the film and doing the prudent thing caused by the primal forces of nature: digging and pulling up the roots of these assailants. I practice the no-dig method to maintain my fields and borders. The less the soil is turned, the few weeds sprout, or so the research indicates. Last spring, I added innumerable yards of nutrient-rich soil and covered it with equal amounts of mulch. In the fall, I scattered seeds of nasturtium, nigella, seafoam statice (also known as sea lavender in the *Limonium* species), and calendula, as well as rhizomes of

various bearded iris and corms of common cornflag. Climbing roses adorn the fence. Everything sprouted as anticipated, but the winds and the birds brought these uninvited visitors who happily took up residence in the lush environment.

When the broadleaf wild cutleaf geranium is small, it is quite beautiful with tiny pink flowers and bright lime green leaves. It is also very fragrant. As this cranesbill matures with its red stems it spreads two or more feet wrapping around neighboring flower stems, making weeding more difficult. The leaf structure mingles with the nigella often resulting in more love-in-the-mist being eradicated than is wanted. Bindweed, with flowers that mimic morning glory, twines to the top of any plant, adding to the difficulty of clearing it from the orchard.

... continued on Page D8